

HENRY AND ISABELLA;

OR, A

T R A I T E

THROUGH

L I F E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

CAROLINE, OR THE DIVERSITIES OF FORTUNE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

V O L. III.

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HENRY AND ISABELLA.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ASSIGNATION.

THE following morning Juliana arose with more than common chearfulness, and prepared for her visit to the bathing house. She was at the seat in the park, where Lady Frances had appointed her to meet her woman, some minutes before she appeared to conduct her; during which time she felt so much impatience, that a stranger who had observed her, would have guessed the assignation to have been of a very different nature. At length Mrs. Burne arrived, and put an end to

her apprehensions ; for she began to fear that a return of her Lady's disorder might have detained her. After a pleasant walk, they reached the place of meeting, which was such as would have suited two faithful lovers as well as friends ; for it was situated in the most sequestered part of the park, upon the verge of a small, but clear and beautiful lake, whose banks rising on every side, and being clothed with the richest verdure, and crowned with weeping willows, hanging birch, mountain pine, and other picturesque trees, formed an enclosure of the most pleasing kind. Fronting the door of the bathing-house by which Juliana entered, was a large folding one, which being thrown open, afforded the most delightful view of the lake, its green enclosure, and a waterfall broken by rough stones, and several trees and bushes, which, in part, concealed it from the sight. The morning

being very hot, the sun shining with unclouded splendor, nothing could be more refreshing and agreeable than this cool retreat; our heroine was enchanted by its beauty; and when Lady Frances told her it was intirely planned by Sir Charles himself, she expressed her admiration of his taste in the warmest terms. He really has a great deal (said Lady Frances) and a great deal of understanding, knowledge, and goodness of heart; all he wants is a well-suited partner to possess that heart, and detach it from a few ill-grounded prejudices and consequent follies which at present prevent his becoming the perfect character nature designed him for.

But would not a lady run some hazard, who should undertake to remove them, (answered Juliana.) Men of Sir Charles's sense do not adopt an opinion, till they imagine they have well examined its validity: and I think I have

observed, that men are more tenaciously fond of a false principle, and exert far more ingenuity and force to maintain it, than ever they bestow upon the defence of poor unregarded truth. That is (replied Lady Frances) because falsehood requires all, and more than all, the ingenuity which the most sensible man possesses, to support her unstable cause; whereas truth, though naked and unprotected by wit or learning, can, by merely telling her own simple tale, silence the eloquent, and refute the wise. But Sir Charles's grand error, that upon which all the rest depend, is not one of those that favor inclination, and may rather be said to be chosen than received; it is a mistake which the general appearance of things is but too much calculated to lead a man of reflection into, though there cannot be one more dangerous to his interest, morals and peace. He believes, that
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is, he once did believe, that the present generation of young women are not such, in whose hands a man of sense could, without extreme rashness, trust his repose and honour. In short, that neither their educations, or general habits, fit them for wives. He admires female beauty; acknowledges that many women have wit and talents, and, had their minds been properly cultivated, might have been amiable; but the wrong bias of modern education is, he says, sufficient to spoil the best disposition: for what (have I often heard him say) are female accomplishments, the acquisition of which occupy so many of the most valuable years of life, and why are they studied? Is a young lady taught to be graceful and elegant, in order that she may endear herself to her friends, and do honour to her instructors? Is she persuaded to apply to any particular study, such as

music, painting, &c. because her father is fond of it, and would be mortified if she does not excel? These are motives that would lead her mind insensibly to its proper duties, and the kind friend and attentive daughter, would probably become the obliging and faithful wife. But the very contrary of this is the present mode; a girl is told, that she must be content to confine herself to her father's house, her masters and governess, for a certain number of years, at the end of which she shall be introduced to the gay world, or, as it is called, brought out, with all possible *eclat*. And wherefore? That, too, is fully explained to the young lady, in order that she may captivate some man of rank and fortune, and marry to advantage. Here did it end, all would be tolerably well; but, contrary to the comedies we usually see performed in our theatres, where matrimony

mony concludes, in our dramas of modern life, it only begins the piece; for having run through the usual forms of husband-hunting, and at last, by means of family connections, or the interference of some assisting friend, caught the fool who is to afford her the grand privileges she has sought so long, the reign of levity commences, and he has no choice, but to close his eyes, and mix with the numerous herd who share his fortune; or, by opening them to the folly he has committed, live in a constant state of domestic discord.

Such (continued Lady Frances) has been my nephew's opinion of modern female manners; and though I doubt not but there are to be found very many amiable exceptions, yet I fear it is, in general, but too just. Wherein then is he blameable for entertaining it? (said Juliana.) He is blameable, for not rather endeavouring to discover one of

the exceptions I just mentioned, (answered Lady Frances,) than suffering a prejudice against the married state to become one of the habits of his mind, and entering into such a plan of life as must, if long persevered in, render him unworthy the affection of a woman of principle and delicacy. Ah! (continued she,) what would I not give to see him the husband of my dear Miss Maitland! Pardon, my love, a wish which I assure you is but the effusion of the moment, and proceeds from the admiration I feel for your many and uncommon excellencies.

You cannot, my dearest madam, (replied Juliana,) pay me a higher compliment than is implied by wishing me the wife of a man who I know you consider and love as a son; but you do not know that I am destined never to change the name of Maitland. I have heard (replied her ladyship) that a part
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of your fortune depends upon your preserving it; but I did not know that you had quite resolved in favor of Sir George. I have several times seen him at Mr. Mordant's. May you be happy, my dear Juliana, whoever is so fortunate as to become the object of your choice.

I have by no means resolved in favor of Sir George, (answered our heroine,) but I am fully determined never to alter my name. If I do not marry a Maitland, I will die single. There is a younger brother, (said Lady Frances, smiling,) who Mrs. Mordant tells me is one of the finest young men in the kingdom. You blush, my dear! your countenance was not intended to keep secrets. Let me again repeat, May my sweet Juliana be happy, let who will be the object of her choice! though I must acknowledge, that, had that

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choice

choice been left to me, Mr. Maitland would have been less fortunate.

Several hours had passed in the most agreeable manner, before either of the friends thought of returning to their different habitations. Lady Frances had prevailed upon Juliana to breakfast with her, which she the more readily consented to do, having the evening before mentioned to Mrs. Mordant the promise she had made of meeting her the next morning, which she knew would prevent the family's being alarmed by her unusually long absence, or their waiting breakfast for her, as they had once done. The pleasantness of the place she was in, and the company of one who, short as their intimacy had been, was become so dear to her, gave wings to the hours; and more might have fled unnoticed, had she not been reminded of their lapse. While they were busily engaged in conversation,
they

they were suddenly interrupted by a smart rap at the door, and upon its being opened, Albert made his appearance.

After begging pardon for intruding upon them, he turned to Juliana, and told her, he had been deputed by the whole family at Mordant-Place to petition for her return. You know (continued he) that scarce any of us can live without you; but there is one arrived, about two hours since, who is quite impatient for your presence. Had you seen how poor Lord Belford looked, when he was informed that you were absent, hard as your heart is, it would certainly have pitied his disappointment; but he no sooner heard that you were every moment expected home, being only gone to take a morning walk, than his anguish was suddenly converted into joy; and that again, from your delay, into impatience: such

are the tormenting vicissitudes which love, almighty love! imposes upon his votaries. At last, out of mere compassion to the poor peer, and fearing lest the agitations of his mind should bring on another fit of the gout, I was requested to find you out, and intreat that you will return, and by appearing in all your charms,

At once, both justify and pay
The pains he feels from your delay.

Lord Belford (said Lady Frances) is Lord Belford in the country? He is at present at Mordant-Place, (replied Albert,) but the family there, are not particularly obliged to him for his company, as his motive for honouring them with it, at this time, is rather too apparent: in short, to let your Ladyship into a secret, which will soon be promulgated, he is fallen so desperately into love with Miss Maitland,

Maitland, that he cannot exist out of her presence. If he is so much in love as you describe him to be, (answered Juliana, smiling,) his case is indeed desperate; for I fear it will never be my fortune to wear a coronet. Then it will be your fortune to reject one, (replied Albert,) for I am confident, had poor Lord Belford a dozen, he would lay them all at your feet. Where did you become acquainted with him? (said her Ladyship, addressing our heroine.) I never had the honour of seeing him till yesterday, (answered she,) when he dined at Marly; and as your Ladyship knows how large a part of the day I passed in your apartment, you cannot but acknowledge that my charms are very striking, and that Lord Belford submitted as readily as the enemies of Cæsar: for, according to Mr. Albert Mordant's account, my conquest must have been atchieved by
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a single glance, and that the first too, or his Lordship's passion could never have made such a progress in so very short a time. Oh! (answered Albert,) the strongest passion is always of the quickest growth; that which requires time and care is ever weak and puny.

I wonder (said Lady Frances) that Sir Charles did not mention to me his being here yesterday. She then paused, and seemed wholly lost in thought for a moment; when, suddenly recovering from her reverie, she asked Albert if Lord Belford intended to continue long at Mordant-Place. Only a fortnight, (answered Albert.) It was settled, before I came out this morning, that he should make one of our party to Stanton races, and from thence he means to return to his seat in the west of England. But come, Miss Maitland, (continued he, assisting her to put on her calash,) consider, every moment we delay adds
to

to the pangs your love-sick peer is condemned to feel. If you resolve not to be kind, at least be not unnecessarily cruel. Juliana replied, that he was far more cruel, in tearing her from that sweet retreat; and still more, (continued she, approaching Lady Frances,) from the mistress of it. Her Ladyship said, she hoped Lord Belford's being at Mordant-Place would not prevent her having sometimes the pleasure of seeing her at the bathing-house; adding, that she should breakfast there every morning. Juliana perfectly understood the invitation, and replied, that it must be something more than want of inclination that should prevent her attendance upon her every fine morning; and after Albert had, in the name of his mother, expressed a hope of soon being favored with her company for a day, they took their leave.

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On their return home, the subject of Lord Belford's passion was renewed; for it was difficult to force Albert out of his usual vein: and though our heroine strove to change the conversation, by introducing several topics of discourse which she thought sufficiently common and easy to be discussed, the moment she ceased to speak, he instantly recurred to those that best suited his disposition and habit of mind.

Upon their arrival at the house, they found the room where the family usually sat in a morning quite empty, the ladies being gone up to dress, and, as a servant informed Albert, my Lord and Mr. Mordant in the library. Upon looking at her watch, Juliana found it was full three o'clock; and dinner being always ready exactly at half an hour past four, she hastened to her apartment, in order to prepare herself for it.

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She was not half dressed when somebody rapped gently at her door; which being opened by her maid, Lady Maitland entered. Surprised to see her ready before the moment of assembling in the dining parlour, she expressed her wonder at so unusual a phenomenon; to which Lady Maitland answered, that not having seen her all morning, she had a mind to indulge herself with half an hour of her dear child's company, before the rest of the family were ready to share it with her. You see, (said she,) I can exert myself when I have a motive sufficiently strong. She then proceeded to complain of the very little of her daughter's company she was suffered to enjoy; saying, she should certainly be jealous of Lady Frances Seward, if she monopolized so much of her time. To all this apparent fondness, Juliana returned obliging and respectful answers; but there was something

thing in Lady Maitland's manner which prevented its having any effect upon her heart, something that proved it did not flow from her own.

She then proceeded to tell our heroine, that she had written to town for her new dress, and to describe in what respects she intended it should be different from hers, and wherein they should be the same; adding, that as it was to be a full dress, it was necessary to make considerable alterations both in the form and trimming, in the latter of which she feared her dear girl would think she had been a little extravagant. Juliana replied, that she wished her to order whatever she liked best, provided the expence was not greater than her purse would admit of. You know (continued she) my income is not at present very large, and running in debt, while I am under age, and cannot insure payment to those who are willing to

to trust me, is what I cannot endure to think of. Not insure the payment of a debt ! (exclaimed Lady Maitland,) what hinders your paying any you may now contract, when you come of age ? I may not live till I am of age, (answered Juliana,) and am therefore resolved to spend no more than is certainly my own : but (continued she, smiling,) I am at present pretty rich, having received a quarter's allowance just before I left Furze-Hill. I'm extremely glad to hear that, (replied Lady Maitland,) for, notwithstanding the elegant present you have made me, unless you can be good enough to afford me a little more assistance, it will not be in my power to go to Stanton races; which, as Mr. Mordant is one of the stewards, would be thought a great slight. Travelling, especially upon the continent, is so very expensive; and though Mr. Mordant is an exceedingly good

good kind of man, he is one of those who knows how to make every one pay their proper share.

Juliana now clearly comprehended the motive which had been strong enough to induce her Ladyship to hurry over the important task of dressing, and actually appear equipped for the day, a full hour before the time of dinner. She replied, gravely, that it was a pity she could not, for the sake of her own peace and comfort, contrive to be more independent upon so considerable an income as she possessed. That any assistance in her power to afford, she could not refuse to a mother, but at present she had several demands unanswered. She had two or three pensioners, whose salaries were nearly due; and, being their only dependence, they must not be disappointed: that the rent of her school-house, and the teachers stipends must likewise be paid this quarter;

quarter; so that she feared it would not be possible for her to spare much, but if fifty guineas would supply her present wants, it was at her service.

It is no wonder that you are not rich, while you burden yourself with such unnecessary expences, (answered Lady Maitland.) Perhaps (replied Juliana) we differ a little in our opinions of what is unnecessary. I am sorry that I cannot with any tolerable degree of convenience to myself, or justice to others, supply you with a larger sum. If that will be of use to you, I will fetch it immediately.

Lady Maitland was not one of those who are above accepting small advantages, when they cannot procure great ones. She answered, that though fifty pounds would not enable her to appear in the manner she ought to do, it was better than nothing; upon which our heroine opened the drawer of a small writing

writing desk, which she usually carried about with her, and took out a fifty pound bank note, which she presented to her Ladyship, who received it with a discontented look, saying, My Juliana was not used to be worse than her word, and she promised me fifty guineas. Juliana blushed for her mother's unfeeling meanness, and again opening the same drawer, took out a note for ten pounds, and folding it in the other which she had in a half peevish manner thrown upon the table, gave them both to her, not without an air a little expressive of disdain.

Her Ladyship having obtained the purpose for which her visit was made, though not quite in so full a manner as she had expected, did not stay long for the sake of enjoying her dear child's conversation; but pretending to want something which she had left in her dressing room, quitted the apartment, leaving

leaving her to finish the business of the toilet at leisure. This business, though never neglected, did not employ so many of Juliana's hours as it did of her mothers; indeed, very few who dressed with so much elegance, were so short a time about it, so that notwithstanding the interruption she had received, she was ready a quarter of an hour before the time of dining. But these odd quarter and half hours, which in general hang so heavy, she never suffered to be unemployed: the present was filled up with giving her cousin Mary an account of the manner in which she had spent the former part of that morning, as well as the preceding day; for she constantly made her and Mrs. Maitland partakers of every circumstance that befel her, especially those that afforded her pleasure. She had before, in the fullest manner, described the person and character of Lady Frances, and the
present

present sheet was half filled with her praises. It was one of her first and strongest wishes to bring her new friend personally acquainted with those she had so long loved and esteemed; as a preparation for which she had already repeatedly delineated them in such expressions of warm love, gratitude, and respect, that Lady Frances had more than once declared it would give her pleasure to be known to persons so worthy and amiable. Nor was she without hopes of persuading her to favor Mrs. Maitland with a visit, at the time she returned to Furze-Hill. Juliana's mind was much above that mean jealousy, which narrow ones so often feel from a consciousness that they merit little, and may therefore easily be rivalled in their friendships, or rather in their intimacies; for narrow minds are incapable of friendship. She wished to communicate every possible pleasure to
those

those she esteemed, and particularly desired, that all those whom she loved should love one another.

From the pleasing employment of conversing (for so she considered this confidential correspondence) with those she so much regarded, our heroine was called by a summons to dinner. Upon entering the dining parlour, where the whole family, together with their noble guest, and several of the neighbouring ladies and gentlemen were assembled, the first who approached her was Sir Charles Hastings, who respectfully took her hand to lead her to the table, where having placed her, he seated himself by her side. Having returned the how-do-ye-do's of the company, her attention was engaged by Lord Belford, who having taken his place exactly opposite to her, addressed her with a voice of much softness, asking, if a poor invalid might hope at last to ob-

tain a moment of her notice? She politely begged his pardon for not having observed him sooner; inquired after his health, and expressed much satisfaction, on hearing that he felt himself recovering, and growing stronger every hour. This satisfaction she really did feel; for she was much pleased with the lively conversation of Lord Belford, was a stranger to any part of his character, except his reputation for generosity and good nature, (qualities of which she was a great admirer,) and believed that his age and infirmities set his forming the slightest pretensions to a young woman of her great expectations almost out of the list of possibilities. On all these accounts, she listened to him with more than ordinary pleasure, and replied to every thing he said to her with particular complacency. If Sir Charles happened to speak to her at the same time with his Lordship, which was
more

more than once the case, she never failed to answer the peer first, and upon all occasions gave him a kind of preference, which the poor Baronet would have given worlds to obtain.

In the afternoon, as Lord Belford could not walk, a party at whist was proposed. Lady Maitland, Mrs. Mor-dant, Sir Harry Windsor, and another lady and gentleman, offered themselves to make up the table, and were just about to draw for places and partners, when the Peer turning to Juliana, by whom he had seated himself in the drawing room, asked her, if she would not favor him so far as to make one of their number. Juliana, who was at no time fond of cards, but least during the summer, when nature presents every intelligent creature with so many sources of amusement, greatly preferable to one which nothing but the long absence of others can excuse a sensible

mind for partaking of, hesitated a moment, and then said, if they wanted her, she was at their service. To which his Lordship answered, then we certainly want you ; and as it is always a custom to indulge children when they are not well, and I readily acknowledge myself a mere grown baby, I shall be quite disappointed, if not out of humour, unless you are assigned me for a partner. Mrs. Mordant said, with a smile, that, as his Lordship had condescended to plead childhood, it was but reasonable the privileges of that state, to which so many have a right, though few thought proper to claim them, should be allowed him : and none of the company objecting, Juliana, not without a little inward reluctance, sat down as Lord Belford's partner for the rubber.

Though our heroine had not at all studied the rules of whist, and practised them

them very little, her good sense and quickness of apprehension enabled her to play the game well, and his Lordship appeared highly satisfied with his partner during the two first rubbers; when she requesting to be excused for the remainder of the afternoon, he was obliged to cut in again with Lady Maitland.

Juliana had watched Lord Belford and her mother, both at Marly, and this day, in hope of observing in the former, some of that admiration, with the supposition of which Albert, and even Miss Mordant, had so often complimented the latter. I say, in hope; for she could not help secretly wishing, that she might have an advantageous opportunity of changing her name. She thought the title of countess would a little shade her follies; at least, she felt that she would be less to her, and she should blush less for Lady Belford

than for Lady Maitland. But she could not perceive that more than very common-place gallantries gave rise to a kind of expectation which she plainly saw her mother entertained, and which she concluded, was the only cause of her young relations flattering her with the belief that they had marked a more than ordinary regard in his Lordship's behaviour to her, except an inclination to divert themselves a little at her expence, of which she had more than once suspected Albert, notwithstanding his apparent good nature; and of which she knew Miss Mordant to be as capable as an envious disposition without talents could admit.

A few days, however, fully convinced her, that, however Lady Maitland might flatter herself with gay hopes, nothing could be further from the intentions of Lord Belford than a marriage with her, and that his views
were

were fixed in a quarter which must for ever preclude such an expectation.

The following morning, induced both by the fineness of the weather, and the inclination she always felt to converse with Lady Frances, Juliana breakfasted at the bathing-house; with this pleasure she indulged herself almost every day, and every day returned more delighted with the understanding, manners and disposition of her friend. The first morning of her absence, Lord Belford complained much of the loss they sustained by it; the loss of what, he said, was in his estimation the most valuable thing upon earth, pleasure; and added, with a tone of affected half anger, who is this aunt of Sir Charles's, by whom we are to be deprived of what is so irrecoverable? Don't be quite so sure (cried Albert) that it is all for the aunt's sake; suppose Sir Charles himself should have been of the party? It

is true, I did not actually see him yesterday, but methought I could trace his footsteps on the grass. Nobody, who is acquainted with Lady Frances, (replied Juliana,) will think I can want any inducement to visit her, except the pleasure of her conversation. What Lady Frances, (exclaimed the Peer.) Lady Frances Seward, (answered Mrs. Mordant,) one of the daughters of the late Earl of Clareville. Her sister was mother to Sir Charles Hastings. I once knew her, (said his Lordship, with some hesitation;) she was then reckoned handsome and accomplished. She is still both, (said Juliana,) and one of the most pleasing women I ever knew. Well, I don't think so, (cried Lady Maitland;) in my opinion she is too tall, and her eyes are too large; then she is so pale, it is quite frightful; one would think she had not an hour to live. I hope, (replied our heroine,)
that

that paleness is no certain proof of illness,—any more than freshness is of youth or health, she was about to have said; but her good-nature suppressed her wit, as indeed it always did, when the one could not display itself but at expence of the other.

She has a very large fortune—has she not? (said Lord Belford.) She might have had one of the largest in the kingdom, (replied Mrs. Mordant,) for her father was so much offended by Lady Harriot's marriage with the late Sir Philip Hastings, that he left all his fortune, except one estate, which he annexed to the title, to his youngest daughter; but the moment it came into her possession, she generously divided every shilling with her sister: notwithstanding which, and several other very liberal actions she has performed, she is still one of the best female fortunes we have, except that

Lady, (continued she, waving her hand towards Juliana,) and a few more, we have none so large. She makes an odd kind of use of it, (said Lady Maitland, not appearing to have heard what Mrs. Mordant said of her generosity,) and leads a strange kind of moping life. Then she is so particular in her ways of thinking, and so fond of displaying her learning, (cried Miss Mordant;) I do not wonder she never married, (rejoined her Ladyship.)

Our heroine was about to have answered these accusations, so unmercifully and unjustly brought against her friend, when the entrance of Sir Charles Hastings, who seldom suffered a day to pass without visiting Mordant-Place, put an end to the conversation.

The subject of Stanton races was then brought forward, and Lady Maitland asked Sir Charles, if he intended to be there; to which he answered, that he
fully

fully meant to do himself that honour. Lord Belford said, he found himself so much stronger within the last three days, that he hoped to be a principal performer at the balls; to which Lady Maitland answered, that whoever had the honour of being his partner, would have cause to rejoice, for she thought his Lordship danced better than any man she ever knew. Lord Belford only bowed in return for this compliment. Perhaps a bow was not all that her Ladyship expected; but with that she was forced to be content. The Peer then asked Sir Charles, if Lady Frances intended to honour the races with her presence. My aunt (answered he) would be happy to show any proof of respect to Mr. and Mrs. Mordant, but she has so long refused herself from public places of every kind, that it would be quite disagreeable to her; and I am sure they are too good to wish her to do what

would so much distress her. To this Mrs. Mordant returned an obliging answer, and, after a good deal more chat upon the subject, invited the Baronet to make one in their party; saying, Lord Belford had proposed their setting out two or three days before the races began, and making a pleasant little tour in their way thither, and another on their return: to which Sir Charles readily consented, expressing a deep sense of the obligation Mrs. Mordant conferred upon him, in suffering him to become one of their attendants.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FIRST LOVER.

IN the course of a few days, Lord Belford was so much recovered from his late illness, that he could walk about the room without any assistance, and in less than a week had regained as great a degree of activity as men of fifty usually possess. In proportion as he recovered his health and strength, his assiduity and attentions to our heroine increased, and became at length so pointed, as to escape the notice of none but herself. Partly blinded by the want of that quick-sighted vanity which represents every flatterer as a lover, and partly by the improbability there was that a man of Lord Belford's age, who did not want understanding, or knowledge of the world, should either hope
or

or wish to marry a woman of her youth and fortune, she did not in the smallest degree suspect his intentions, till an actual declaration from his Lordship, with the offer of a vast settlement, the full command of her own fortune, and every circumstance of pomp and splendor that could dazzle vanity, or bribe ambition, left her no longer the possibility of doubting.

The moment that surprize would permit her to speak, she in the fullest and most explicit manner declined, what she termed, the honour he offered her, softening her refusal with every expression of respect which politeness could demand, or good-nature dictate. She was far from fearing that he would condescend a second time to make her such proposals, much less tease her with complaints and repetitions of them; she was therefore greatly surprized, when, instead of immediately withdrawing

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ing his pretensions, he declared, that the happiness of his life depended upon the success of his present hopes, and that he would never forego them till she was the wife of another.

Fearing that he might interest her mother in his cause, who she knew considered rank and fortune as the only things necessary in marriage, and by that means subject her to more of what her Ladyship might call maternal advice, than would be agreeable to her, she went immediately to her dressing-room, where the greatest part of her morning was usually spent, and in few words informed her of what had passed between his Lordship and herself, begging that, if any application should be made to her, she would entirely discourage his further pursuit, since she was fixed in her resolution of never suffering it to become successful.

Lady

Lady Maitland appeared excessively hurt and amazed by the information. She said, it was one of the last things she should have expected; that Lord Belford must certainly be out of his senses, to think of marrying a girl of Juliana's age and fortune; and entirely agreed with her, that nothing could be more absurd than such an intention. Had he fixed upon a fine woman of forty, (said she,) there would have been some reason in it; but a girl, a mere child! nothing could be more ridiculous. She assured her daughter, that, if he spoke to her upon the subject, she should tell him her sentiments in the fullest manner; and advised her, the next time he renewed his addresses, to recommend a more suitable and rational choice to him: adding, no woman of forty, in the kingdom, would refuse him.

Juliana

Juliana having thus, as she believed, secured herself from being teased by more than one, had little doubt, by a second steady refusal, of putting an end to his Lordship's pretensions; and determined if, on the contrary, he was mean enough to persecute her, in such a manner as should render her stay at Mordant-Place disagreeable, (for she found it was now his intention to return there, after the races were over,) to shorten her visit, and, little as she wished to do so during Sir George Maitland's stay there, return to Furze-Hill.

A whole day passed after she had made this resolution, without Lord Belford's appearing to seek any occasion of speaking to her; but his behaviour was too particular to give her any hopes of his having relinquished the character of a lover. In the evening, however, she was convinced that he had not suffered the day to pass unemployed, in what he supposed

supposed the advancement of his wishes; for scarce was she retired to her apartment at night, when Lady Maitland entered, and, after several of her usual tender speeches, by way of prelude, told her, that she had been revolving Lord Belford's proposals in her mind, and, as the welfare of her dear child was the thing nearest to her heart, viewing them in all possible lights, and upon weighing the advantages which must arise to her from accepting them, in opposition to the objections that might be made to them, she found the latter light and trifling, in comparison of the former; and that, after the most mature consideration, she would by all means advise her to accept the honour he intended her; which, she said, was as great as any young woman, be her accomplishments and fortune what they would, could reasonably aspire to, and what many a lady of the very first quality would

would think herself happy in obtaining.

Juliana heard all she had to say with patience and respect, but when she had done speaking, begged, in the most serious manner, that she would not any more give her the pain of rejecting the advice she thought proper to offer her. Were I (said she) poor and dependent, I would not relieve myself out of circumstances so unpleasant by a mercenary marriage; much less will I be guilty of such an unjustifiable piece of folly, now that I am opulent, and accountable for my actions——Do not be too secure! (interrupted Lady Maitland.) Every condition is liable to change. I advise you, as a real friend, to accept Lord Belford's offers, and secure to yourself the immense advantages they will afford you. When you are his wife, and not before, you may with
certainty

certainly talk of opulence and independence!

If I may not call myself rich and independent, (answered our heroine,) who shall pretend to be so? Then you intend to marry Sir George Maitland? (said her Ladyship.) I am by no means resolved to marry any body, (replied Juliana,) but of the two, I would rather give my hand to Lord Belford than Sir George. There! then you lose half your boasted fortune at once! (cried Lady Maitland.) However, I am glad you have no particular attachment to him, because I know he has none for you, his affections having long been fixed upon Miss Mordant. Upon Miss Mordant! (exclaimed Juliana.) Yes, (answered her Ladyship,) upon Miss Mordant! Had his fortune been large enough to have obtained her father's consent, it would have been a match long since: but I know it has been agreed

agreed upon between the lovers, that he should treat you with all possible neglect, in order to force you to refuse him; the moment you have done which, the half of your fortune becoming his, it will be a match immediately.

I wonder, (said Juliana, after a moment's pause) that, engaged as you say the affections of Miss Mordant are to Sir George Maitland, she should still be so very fond of admiration. Not at all, (answered Lady Maitland;) nothing can be more uncertain than her marriage with Sir George, for, should you resolve not to refuse him, he must become your husband, or forfeit all interest in your fortune, either of which would equally destroy her hope; it would therefore be very wrong in her to lose any other chance for settling to advantage. Juliana smiled, and said, she congratulated her upon possessing such very complying affec-
 5 tions.

tions. They are such affections as every young woman of fashion should possess, (answered her Ladyship;) love, and such kind of romantic stuff, is only fit for untaught country girls. Then, as I am quite a country girl, (answered our heroine,) and untaught in such kind of doctrine, I must here declare, that I will never bestow my hand upon any man, till I can give my whole heart with it; and till I meet with one, who, according to my notions of worthiness, deserves both, I will live single. Sir George Maitland is by no means that man; and I shall be obliged to your Ladyship if you will inform Miss Mordant, that, so far as her future fortune depends upon me, it is perfectly secure, and that the moment I come of age, I shall be ready to give her lover his refusal, whenever it is agreeable to him to ask it. As for Lord Belford, give me leave to say, once for all, that,

were

were he a prince, and ready to settle whole provinces upon me, I would refuse him, as I do now.

A degree of anger and ill-temper, which Juliana had never before observed, sparkled in the eyes of Lady Maitland. She rose, and, with a voice full of resentment, told our heroine, that she might one day repent her folly. When that day arrives, (continued she, with a look of malicious triumph,) remember that I warned you of it; and I once more repeat my advice, if you are wise, and consult your own advantage, marry Lord Belford. Saying which words, she quitted the room with an air very different to that which Juliana had been accustomed to from her.

For some moments our heroine stood in silent amazement, unable to account for so unexpected a change; till recollecting the meanness of her mother's

disposition, and the necessitous state to which her extravagance reduced her, she made no doubt, but that Lord Belford had offered some considerable present, in case she could influence her in his favor. Satisfied with this probable solution of her Ladyship's strange conduct, she retired to rest; but some hours were spent in reflections, partly pleasing, and partly painful, before sleep visited her pillow. In both of these, Henry Maitland had a share. Sometimes she wished his return, sometimes feared it; sometimes her imagination was brightened with every circumstance of happiness, sometimes gloomed by apprehended disappointment, and her heart almost sunk in dejection. At length, nature's soft restorer, balmy sleep, deigned to weigh her eye-lids down, and steep her senses in forgetfulness.

Early

Early the following morning, our heroine arose, and repaired to her favorite place of rendezvous, the bathing-house. She found Lady Frances already there, who kissing her cheek with maternal tenderness, told her she had been thinking of her almost the whole last night. Juliana asked, upon what account she had been happy enough to occupy so much of her thought? My dearest young friend, (answered Lady Frances,) your excellencies render you extremely dear to me; but there is another who is, I fear, too sensible of those excellencies, for whose sake, if I cannot influence your affections a little in his favor, I could almost wish you less perfect. I need not tell you, that the person I mean is Sir Charles Hastings. You cannot be a stranger to the love he bears you. You are the only woman who could ever fix his

serious affections. Cannot you afford us some little hope?

Ah! my dearest madam, (cried Juliana,) why will you ask what I have not the power to grant? To be your relation, to be considered by you as a daughter, would indeed be happiness, could I give up—could I divest my heart—What shall I say, my dear Lady Frances?—You perfectly understand me. Have you not said, my countenance was not designed to keep secrets? I do understand you, my lovely girl, (answered Lady Frances,) nor from this hour will I ever importune you upon a subject which I see distresses you. Sir Charles must endeavour to conquer a hopeless passion, which can only be indulged at the expence of his future peace. Oh, that it could have been successful! How happy, how respectable, how worthy, would the remainder of his life have been! But all hope
of

of that is now over ; he will never meet a second Juliana Maitland ! She spoke these words with great emotion, and scarce had pronounced them, when an inner door opened, and, with a look of extreme dejection, the Baronet appeared.

Juliana instinctively arose as Sir Charles entered ; the blood crimsoned her cheek, and she sincerely wished herself at a distance from the spot upon which she then stood. He approached her with a tender melancholy respect, and gently taking one of her hands,—can Miss Maitland (said he) forgive the presumption I have been guilty of ? I could not behold happiness in view, and not strive to attain it. In many women I have remarked several perfections, but never, till I beheld you, did I find them united in one. Unworthy as I am of such a treasure, it cannot be thought strange that I should wish to

make it my own. But you are too good to add your anger to my disappointment; and though the happiness of your love is reserved for another, may I not aspire to some degree of your friendship? For Lady Frances's sake, for—Your own sake, (interrupted our heroine, recovered from her confusion,) I shall gladly grant to your merits that esteem they so justly demand. More than friendship is not in my power to give; but of that, if worthy his acceptance, Sir Charles Hastings may always be assured.—Ah! loveliest of women, (exclaimed the Baronet, pressing her hand to his lips in a rapture rather warmer than modern friendship would authorize,) do not increase my regrets by your condescending kindness! Happy! happy Maitland!

When I promised you my friendship, (said Juliana, gravely,) I meant it should be upon condition that you solicit no more.

more. I will solicit no more, (answered the Baronet, in much agitation,) I will not disturb your happiness by my complaints. From this moment do I cease to hope; and perhaps, in time, my wishes may be governed by reason, and become obedient to your's. In the mean time, and to the end of my life, the sweet friendship you offer me shall be my solace and consolation. I receive it, charming Miss Maitland, as a rich gift; nor will I forfeit a possession so valuable, by vainly striving to gain what is unattainable.

You now speak and act like yourself, (said Lady Frances, addressing her nephew.) In the weak transports of last night, I had almost lost you; but you are now again master of that reason which was bestowed upon us for the regulation of our passions, and in the perversion or loss of which man is the most worthless,

worthless, inconsistent, and miserable of beings.

I trust, my dear madam, (answered Sir Charles,) that I shall in time be able to subscribe to this rational creed. At present, though somewhat cooler than last night, I am scarce equal to the task. The code of wisdom is easily learnt, but its laws are practised with pain and difficulty. That practice shall however be my study; and though I may never be a happy, I may at least become a patient man. So saying, he quitted the room, with a look too disordered to afford him any present pretensions to the epithet he professed to desire.

The tears which fell from the eyes of Lady Frances, strongly affected our heroine. She was silent for a moment; then rising, and approaching her with a kind of fearful tenderness, You will love me no longer! (said she.) You will rather regard me as the cause of uneasiness

ness to one so dear to you. No, my beloved Juliana, (replied her Ladyship,) if I did not sincerely love you—if I did not think you the most amiable and deserving of women, I should be less grieved and disappointed. The very first time I had the pleasure of being in your company, I formed a wish, which has grown more and more strong as my knowledge of your merits increased. My partiality to my nephew induced me to hope, that he might appear to you as agreeable as, I soon found, you were to him; and, notwithstanding the intimation you gave me of a pre-engagement of affections, I still flattered myself that it might be possible. It is the relinquishment of these ill-founded pleasing hopes which has forced from me those external appearances of concern by which your good-nature is affected. I beg your pardon, my love, for showing such an earnest desire for what is so re-

pugnant to your wishes ! Believe me, I would not insure the happiness of Sir Charles Hastings at the expence of your peace ; and that, short as hath been our knowledge of each other, I do not love him more than you.

The conversation was of too interesting a nature to suffer breakfast to be much attended to : it was removed almost untasted ; and, after a promise of visiting Lady Frances at the same place again the next morning, our heroine took her leave, and returned, attended by one of her footmen, who always waited upon her home, her Ladyship not thinking it safe for her to walk through the park alone. Her reflexions, as she passed along, were more uneasy and dissatisfactory than she usually experienced. So far was she from triumphing in the effect of her charms, that nothing could be more mortifying to her sensibility, than the thought of
disturbing

disturbing the peace of those whom she so much esteemed. She was incapable of giving pain to any human creature, without partaking it with them; but, to distress those whose merit and kindness demanded her esteem and gratitude, —to force tears from the eyes of Lady Frances Seward, was not to be thought upon without a pang of regret, more interesting and afflictive to her heart than ordinary occasions could excite.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ECCLAIRCISSEMENT.

OUR heroine parted from Lady Frances so much sooner than usual, that, upon her return to Mordant-Place, she found the family still seated round the breakfast-table. Small as the company was, they were broken into several divisions. Mrs. Mordant and Lord Belford were chatting in a general disengaged manner. Lady Maitland and Miss Mordant were in close confabulation, speaking with low voices, and turning their faces towards each other, so as to exclude the rest of the company from partaking of their conversation. Albert was carelessly looking over a Critical Review; and
Mr.

Mr. Mordant studying a political pamphlet.

No sooner was Juliana seated, than Lady Maitland turning towards her, said, with much ill-humour in her countenance, I can't imagine, my dear, how you can think of going out every morning! Surely you know very little of good-breeding, or believe us extremely ignorant! I thought you came here to visit Mrs. Mordant and me, not to spend half your time with Lady Frances Seward! I did not apprehend (replied Juliana) that good-breeding consisted in useless restraints, or that either Mrs. Mordant or your Ladyship would make any objection to my passing a few hours every day with a person so amiable and worthy as Lady Frances Seward. I hope (answered Mrs. Mordant) that Miss Maitland will, in every respect, consider herself as at home, during her stay here. You cannot won-

der (continued she, addressing Juliana) that your mother should wish for as much as possible of your company; but I am sure she is far from wishing to lay disagreeable restraints upon you, or prevent the cultivation of an intimacy so pleasant and unexceptionable. I would wish her to act right, and like a reasonable creature, (answered Lady Maitland.) I hate romance. Then (replied Lord Belford) your Ladyship and I differ entirely in our sentiments: a little romance is quite necessary to the perfection of the female character; there is no dignity, no superior excellence without it. It is the extinction of it in you, that has introduced the modern cold insensibility among us. When the women ceased to be romantic, the men forgot to love. Oh! (cried Lady Maitland) this is a doctrine that will exactly suit Juliana. But Lord Belford is the last from whom

whom I should have expected to hear it (said Mrs. Mordant.) Why so, my dear madam? (answered he.) Men oftener admire what they do not, than what they do practise.

He had scarce spoken these words, when a post-chaise drove up to the door; and while the company were conjecturing who it should contain, our heroine slipped away to her dressing-room, where she amused herself with writing to her beloved friends at Furze-Hill, till she was interrupted by her maid, who reminded her, that it was time to dress; which task being performed, she recollected that as Lady Maitland, though merely out of ill-temper, had complained of her frequent and long absences, it would appear like an entire disregard of her, if she passed the whole morning alone. At first she thought of going to her apartment, and sitting with her while she dressed; but
fearing

to be again teased about Lord Belford, she resolved to go into the little drawing-room, where the family usually assembled before dinner, and wait till some of them came down.

Upon opening the door, she saw a gentleman standing at one of the windows, in a half-reclining attitude, with a book in his hand. Seeing that he did not observe her, she was about to have closed the door, and return; but just as she was stepping back, he turned towards her, and, to her extreme surprise, presented the countenance of Henry Maitland. Juliana started, the blood rushed into her face, and she was unable to advance or retreat. Nor was his cheek less crimsoned; though it was easy to perceive that he had been prepared for the sight of her, by having been informed that she was in the house.

Reco-

Recovering from the confusion, which the moment before he appeared to have been in, he approached our heroine with a smile of gaiety, and taking her hand, How happy I am (said he) in the pleasure of seeing my dear cousin, so many days before I expected it! How long have you been at Mordant-Place? and when did you hear from our friends at Furze-Hill? I had yesterday the pleasure (said Juliana) of hearing, that Mrs. Maitland and Mary were well. And Sir George, (returned Henry,) was not he included in the list of health? I did not hear that he was sick, (answered Juliana, colouring from a consciousness of Henry's belief, that an engagement of interests, if not of affections, subsisted between herself and his brother;) but I suppose you will soon certify yourself of all these particulars. I shall probably be at home in three days, (answered Henry.)

Henry.) It has been a constant custom with me to spend a couple of days at Mordant-Place, both in my going and returning to and from Oxford. I shall not now exceed that number; but Mrs. Mordant tells me you mean to continue here during the greatest part of the summer. Probably I shall, (answered Juliana, a deeper crimson glowing upon her cheek.) I find you are going to the races, (continued he) and that Lord Belford and Sir Charles Hastings are to be your escort. I believe it is so intended, (answered she, coldly.) If the weather continues to be so fine as it has been for some time past, (proceeded he,) your little jaunt will be extremely delightful. I think it is admirably well planned, and, in so agreeable a party, cannot fail to afford you great pleasure.

Upon my word, (replied Juliana, a little disdainfully,) you have gained a
great

great deal of information since your arrival! Considering the shortness of the time, you have picked up a number of very interesting particulars. Henry was about to reply, when the door opening, Miss Mordant entered, together with Sir Harry Windfor and his sister, a fine showy woman of about eight and twenty, who had enjoyed the benefit of a town education, and acquired all those accomplishments which are expected from it. These, however, she had nearly forgotten, or laid aside. Her harpsichord she never touched; she had refused herself from drawing; was too idle to dance, and had entirely lost her Italian; a tolerable knowledge of the French language, which she had every day occasion to practise, was all she retained; but she was, what is styled, very much the woman of fashion; had seen a great deal of the world, that is, had for the last ten years frequented
all

all the publick places both of London and Paris, dressed in the court style, was acquainted with the newest topics of conversation, a great deal of polite private history, and the particulars of all that passed in the world of gallantry and intrigue. She had long been, what Sir Charles Hastings styled, a husband-hunter; but, though the chase had been followed with considerable ardor and perseverance, no deer, fat enough for her purpose, had yet fallen a prey to her machinations and activity; or, to speak without a figure, she had never been lucky enough to meet with an opportunity of marrying in such a manner as would enable her to live in a certain style, among a certain class. She had not, however, given up the hope, or pursuit; every man of fortune and fashion was a mark at which she aimed the arrows with which Cupid had armed her eyes: but her design was

was too openly displayed, nor did she take pains enough to conceal her sentiments, with regard to what she esteemed the proper inducements to matrimony; so that they, who at first sight were pleased with her person, had warning, from her undisguised levity, to place the shield of prudence before their hearts, ere she had compleated her conquest. Her general place of residence was with her mother at Bath, where she was admitted unto the first parties, and where her face was as well known as that of the Master of the Ceremonies; but she often visited her brother in the country, and spent a part of every winter at his house in town. Sir Harry, who was a weak well-meaning man, was extremely fond of, and entirely governed by her, she having just the degree of understanding and manners which are best calculated to manage a fool.

The

The entrance of this little party relieved Juliana from the disagreeable necessity of keeping up a common-place conversation with a person who was not indifferent to her, and whose understanding was, she knew, too good to be really interested about such trifles. Miss Windfor, having seen her once or twice at Mr. Mordant's house in town, slightly acknowledged a remembrance of our heroine, by a distant courtesy, and a half-pronounced "I hope you are well, ma'am!" for she was no very warm admirer of the young and beautiful of her own sex; indeed, one of her greatest pleasures was to insult and mortify them, as often as it lay in her power, and Juliana's large fortune, added to the above-named objectionable qualities, rendered her an object of peculiar envy and aversion. She then turned to Henry, and, with the most gracious smile, declared her pleasure

sure in seeing him so unexpectedly, congratulated him upon his manumission from the restraints of a college, and added, "I hope you will now become what nature designed you for, one of us." A very lively conversation then took place between them, upon the subject of his becoming her pupil, during which Miss Mordant whispered Juliana, that it was strongly suspected that Miss Windfor was, in her heart, very partial to Mr. Maitland; and it was thought, would have no objection to giving up the world, of which she had long been so fond, and becoming a country parson's wife.

It was not till now, that Juliana observed Henry's change of dress, and from it, perceived that he had taken orders. Such a proof of his having entirely given up, if, indeed, he ever had entertained any serious thoughts of her, sensibly affected her; and more sensibly,

sensibly, as she felt that the task of disengaging her affections, the object of them continuing so amiable and pleasing, would be no easy one. With a half hesitation, she asked Miss Mordant, whether it was believed that Mr. Maitland returned the Lady's regard? Oh! certainly, (replied Miss Mordant,) there can be little doubt of that. Do you consider what an amazing advantage it will be to him? Every body thinks, that Sir Harry will never marry, so that at his death, all his fortune will be her's. Besides she has ten thousand pounds at her own disposal, has great expectations from her mother, and there is no doubt but her brother will at present do something very handsome for her. I should not wonder if he was at least to double her present income; for he is extremely fond of her, and has no near relations.

While she was speaking, Lady Maitland, Mrs. Mordant, Lord Belford and Albert entered. Mutual compliments being exchanged, Lord Belford approached our heroine, and began a conversation upon indifferent subjects, which she was glad to enter into, as a relief to her spirits, and a means of diverting her attention from mortifying and painful ideas; but she was unable to disengage her thoughts, or answer him with her usual ease and good sense. Her words were confused, and though her eyes were absolutely forbidden to wander towards a quarter of the room where Miss Windfor sat talking with great earnestness to Mr. Maitland, and playing off a thousand affected coquetish airs, yet could she not help listening to what passed there, though, as the lady chose sometimes to speak so low as not to be heard with any distinctness, she could but ill gratify her desire of knowing

ing the subject of their conversation. It was at length interrupted by the announcement of dinner, during which nothing passed but that kind of chat which is usually heard upon such occasions.

When the company were removed into the drawing-room, Miss Windsor, who had been informed by Miss Mor-dant that Lord Belford paid his addresses to Juliana, took particular pains to engage him in conversation. She talked about Bath, London, Paris, the Abbey, the Opera-house; gave her opinion of the best dancers; preferred Rubinelle to Mara; and ran through the whole list of polite public amusement. Then sliding into private histories of ——— and Lady ———, and Colonel C—— and Mrs. D——, one anecdote followed another in such quick succession, that the poor Peer, whose politeness would not suffer him to quit her in the middle of
of

of one of these voluble details, was obliged to submit to the penance of hearing with patience, and the lady had the extreme pleasure of believing that she tormented Juliana, by detaching from her an admirer of so much consequence; for she had no conception that it was possible for a mere private gentlewoman to reject the dignity of a Countess, especially when such a vast fortune as Lord Belford possessed was annexed to it. She was at length interrupted by Lady Maitland, who told her she had a design upon her and her brother, and then related the plan that had been laid down for a three days tour, previous to their going to Stanton, and concluded with saying, she was sure the whole party would rejoice, if she and Sir Harry would join them. She had no sooner done speaking, than Miss Windsor, who had wished for some excuse to get her brother from Juliana, to

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whom he was talking, called out, Harry, come here! I want ye. The Baronet, who never refused any request of her's, immediately arose, and walking across the room, asked what she wanted. Sit down here, said she, pointing to a chair that was placed near, and just now I'll tell you what you must do. She then repeated what Lady Maitland had told her, adding, I think, Harry, I should like to go. With all my heart, (replied her brother,) I have not the least objection. Lay down your own plan, and it shall be my business to assist in the execution. There's a complaisant brother! (cried Lady Maitland.) What an excellent husband would you make, Sir Harry! It is really a thousand pities that you should remain a bachelor. The Baronet bowed. Poor Lady Maitland was unlucky in her compliments: she seldom got more than a bow in return for them.

In

In the mean time, Albert, seeing Sir Harry Windfor leave Juliana, took his seat, and shrugging up his shoulders, exclaimed in a low voice, I wonder any woman alive should ever rear a daughter ! Are you not ashamed, Miss Maitland, to run away with all your mother's admirers ? Have you no compassion ? Don't you consider that the loss of a lover, after five-and-twenty, is a serious thing ? Here is Sir Harry Windfor, an old tried veteran, on whom we thought we could depend ; even he deserts ; he has eyes for a younger, fairer. I begin to think, indeed, that there is no faith in man. Were not I a bright example of dove-like constancy, the cause would be quite past defending.

During the whole of this time, Henry had been lolling over the back of a sofa, upon which Mrs. and Miss Mor-dant sat. The ladies appeared to be chatting with their usual gaiety ; but

Henry wore in his countenance an interested earnestness. He had, during dinner, avoided even to look at Juliana. His conversation was chiefly addressed either to Mr. or Mrs. Mordant, and he appeared to withdraw himself, as much as possible, from general society. When she spoke, he would address something to Mr. Mordant, by whom he sat, seeming unwilling that even the sound of her voice should reach him. How different was this from the conduct she had been accustomed to from him? There was a time when, if his eyes chanced to meet her's, they would soften into sensibility, or sparkle with pleasure; when he listened to every word she spoke with charmed attention, and watched every look, in order to anticipate her wishes. It was in vain that Albert exerted all his humour to divert her: if she smiled, it was with an unmeaning look, which declared that

that she had not attended to what he said. Her every idea was engrossed by the strange change which she had reason to believe had taken place in Henry's sentiments and affections. Finding herself exceedingly incommoded, and almost put out of temper, by Albert's raillery, who in his usual way began to tease her about her list of slaves, protesting that he was the only man who could see her, and preserve his freedom, she took the first opportunity of slipping out of the room, and retiring to her own, where she could, without interruption, give way to the tide of various reflexion which poured in upon her. It was not now that luxury of tender thought with which she was sometimes wont to indulge her moments of solitude, but painful anxiety, rendered still more painful by a kind of uneasy self-disapprobation, which mixed itself with the remembrance of her past conduct.

She blamed herself for having suffered an attachment to any particular person to gain such an improper ascendancy over her heart, before she was, at least from his own declaration, assured that it was mutual; for having entrusted even Mrs. Maitland and Mary with her secret sentiments; how should she be able to appear before them? Should she affect indifference, and acquire, in their opinions, the character of lightness and insincerity? or, should she openly acknowledge to them the disappointment she had met with, and submit to become an object of pity? How, too, should she behave towards the author of her difficulties? Should she strive to assume the sisterly ease and freedom with which she was used to treat him, or must she, by a reserved distant behaviour, show him, and all the world, how much she was hurt at his? Tortured by these various reflexions,

flexions, she resolved, and re-resolved : at length, summoning to her aid that resolution with which nature has furnished every reasonable creature, though it is so seldom, upon proper occasions, called forth, she determined in earnest to attempt a complete conquest over her unreturned affections, not to study what would best deceive her friends and the world ; but to become in reality what she wished them to think her.

She was sensible that her affection for Henry had increased with the belief that she was the object of his, and having now discovered her error, she hoped, by a proper exertion of her reason, and the assistance of female pride, to correct it, and prevent the wretched consequences of yielding to the enervating power of useless regret and hopeless sorrow.

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Naturally

Naturally warm in her hopes, and ardent in the pursuit of an approved object, she determined to go down, and make the first essay of her returning strength of mind. She descended accordingly, and just as she came to the foot of the stairs, met her maid, who said she was coming to request that she would please to walk down, there being a lady in the drawing-room who particularly wished to see her. Upon entering, Lady Maitland presented to her a tall, plain, showy dressed, affected woman, saying, My dear, this is Mrs. Martin. You know the great esteem I have for her, and will, I hope, receive her as a particular friend.

Ah! what a charming creature! (exclaimed Mrs. Martin.) When an infant, I pronounced that she would be a perfect beauty. Many a half-hour have I nursed her. Yes, Juliana, (said Lady Maitland,) you are, I assure you, under
very

very particular obligations to Mrs. Martin, the nature of which I may one day or other explain to you.

Our heroine received the stranger with politeness; more she felt no disposition to treat her with. She remembered that, in the mortifying history of her mother's follies, which had been related to her, Miss Henly had been a more than suspected abettor of them all; and she had often heard Mrs. Maitland mention her as a character wholly unfit and unqualified for the care and education of youth, and attributing many of Lady Maitland's deficiencies and inconsistencies to the bad method in which she had been brought up under so improper a governess.

On these accounts, as well as the affected unpleasing appearance she made, Juliana felt little inclination to return her caresses with more than common civility; but, on the contrary, Mrs.

Martin appeared quite charmed with her, often repeating that her improvements were even beyond her warmest hopes, and that she had not felt so much pleasure for a long time, as she now enjoyed in that of seeing her.

When tea was removed, Lady Maitland and her old favorite walked into the park, where they had a long tête à tête; and the rest of the company, after sitting a little while, agreed to follow their example. Miss Windfor had, in her own opinion, enjoyed a complete triumph, having attributed all Juliana's too visible dejection of spirits to her chagrin at having Lord Belford and Sir Harry kept from her. She was not, however, satisfied, for seeing that Henry had offered his arm to Mrs. Mordant, and fearing that the Peer should pay the same compliment to Juliana, by whose side he was walking, she carelessly came on the other,
and

and suddenly pretending to stumble, caught hold of his arm by way of saving herself. She then affected to limp, saying, she had turned her ankle; upon which his Lordship, whose arm she still held, could not avoid desiring her to accept his assistance, and offering to return back with her, if she found walking painful. She readily accepted the first part of his proposal; but said, she should entirely recover, when she had walked a few yards. Then turning towards her brother, who was a little behind, she called out, Harry, why don't you offer Miss Mor-dant your arm? The Baronet immediately obeyed, and the young lady accepting the civility, our heroine was left to walk alone, Albert not being of the party.

Lord Belford, observing this, instantly requested that she would render his felicity complete, by receiving the

assistance his disengaged arm could afford her. But feeling a strong reluctance to doing any thing that might in the slightest manner encourage his hopes, and persuaded that her resolution was equal to the effort, she answered, that she would by no means encumber his Lordship so unmercifully; but added, with a smile, since I am left in so forlorn a state, I will claim protection where I have a natural right to expect it. So saying, with that air of easy confidential friendship to be expected between two persons who had spent their infancy together, she walked towards Henry, and laid her hand upon his sleeve.

At that instant, the resolution of both appeared to forsake them. Gently taking hold of her hand, to draw it under his arm, he felt it tremble; the emotion was contagious, Henry's trembled too. And will you condescend to
accept

accept my protection? (said he, with a softened accent.) She raised her eyes to his; they were full of softness; his sparkled with transport. A glowing vermillion painted her cheek; she cast her fine eyes to the ground, and remained silent.

This short, but expressive scene, did not pass unobserved by Mrs. Mordant. For reasons, which my reader will easily guess, she wished to see Juliana attached to any body, Sir George Maitland excepted: she had been rather surprised, by her extreme coldness to Sir Charles Hastings, and her perfect insensibility to the great offers made her by Lord Belford, and began to fear that she had resolved to act according to her father's wish, and, notwithstanding the indifference with which he had treated her, marry the person fixed upon for her husband by him. It was therefore very agreeable to her to see even the
dawn

dawn of a preference given by her to any other, as she hoped it would remove every objection to her daughter's marriage with Sir George. She perceived that her presence alone prevented their explaining to each other the sentiments which their eyes had already pretty clearly declared; and, resolving not to throw any obstacle in the way of what she so earnestly desired, pretended to have forgotten something she had to say to Miss Mordant, and turned back to meet her and Sir Harry Windsor, who were not many yards behind them.

It hath often, and judiciously, been observed, that the conversations of true lovers, like the familiar letters of particular friends, though extremely interesting and delightful to those to whom they are addressed, will in general be flat and unentertaining to a person who is not more than ordinarily concerned
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in the matter they contain. We will not, therefore, tire our readers with a minute account of what passed upon this occasion, between our heroine and her happy Henry. Let it suffice to say, that it ended in an explicit declaration of love on his side, and all the encouragement on her's, that was consistent with the truest female delicacy, guided by honour, sincerity and affection. He acknowledged that he had struggled hard to overcome a passion which, from the first moment it took possession of his heart, he had considered as hopeless; that he was returning home, fully persuaded that the task was performed; and that he should be able to meet her only with the esteem of a friend, and the tenderness of a brother. But the moment he was informed, upon his arrival at Mordant-Place, that she was in the house, all his lover-like resolution forsook him, and he felt that,
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in spite of the efforts he had made, his heart was weak as ever. Yet, ashamed entirely to give up what had cost him so dear, he determined to preserve at least the appearance of indifference, and if he could not subdue his love, and regain the ease of which it had deprived him, to keep the painful secret his own, and carry it to the grave in silence.

In the course of chat, (for their walk was not a short one,) Juliana asked him, what it was that Mrs. and Miss Mordant were relating to him, while he hung over the sofa upon which they were sitting, with such earnest attention in his looks? to which he answered, that they were telling him the manner in which she had refused the splendid offers made her by Lord Belford, and, as they had cause to believe, by Sir Charles Hastings, inferring from thence, that she must be strongly attached

tached to somebody else, Sir George Maitland they supposed; and wanted to know if there appeared much fondness, (that was Miss Mordant's word) between them, when they were together.

I am angry with myself, (said our heroine) for not having made Miss Mordant and her family easy upon that head, before this time; it was, indeed, but very lately that I discovered the interest they have in my affairs. I immediately requested Lady Maitland to inform them of my resolution to refuse Sir George, whenever he should give me an opportunity; but I fear she has neglected her commission; however, I will take the first occasion of doing so, for I would not willingly give Miss Mordant, or any other person, a moment of unnecessary pain. As for Lord Belford, (continued she,) the fortune I am likely to possess considered,

sidered, I must be strangely mercenary, could I suffer myself to be bribed by any addition that he, or any other person can make to it. If I cannot be happy with eight thousand pounds a year, twenty will not procure me felicity; and, as for a title, I am neither so vain, or weak, as to look up to that as an object of rational estimation.

Mrs. and Miss Mordant (answered Henry) are more surprised at your coldness to Sir Charles Hastings, whom all the world acknowledges to be a pleasing, sensible, and worthy man. Sir Charles Hastings (answered Juliana) is, I believe, all you mention, and I know not any cause why a woman, whose affections are uninfluenced in favor of another, may not be happy with him. A look of grateful transport spoke the feelings of Henry's heart, as she pronounced these words; he pressed her hand to his lips, then to his bosom, and

and was proceeding to thank her for so flattering, so generous an acknowledgement in his favor, when the appearance of Lady Maitland and Mrs. Martin, approaching through a narrow walk which led directly towards them, put a stop to the effusions of his gratitude, and called a blush upon her cheek, from an apprehension that they might have observed enough to awaken a suspicion of what she did not yet wish to be known to any one. Not that she intended to make a particular secret of her attachment to one whom her judgment, as well as inclination, approved; but she well knew, that little right as her own conduct had given her to interfere in, or pretend to regulate that of a daughter, Lady Maitland would, on Lord Belford's account, whose interest she so warmly espoused, oppose her marriage with Henry to the very utmost of her power; and though that power did

did not extend to a possible prevention, she wished, during her stay at Mordant-Place, to avoid giving her any offence, or subjecting herself to be teased with arguments unsupported by reason, (a senseless jargon of noise and prejudice,) which, as they could neither persuade her contrary to her understanding, or influence her in opposition to her affections, she determined, as much as possible, to save herself the pain of attending to; but the moment her eyes met those of her ladyship, the anger that sparkled in them convinced her that it had not escaped her notice.

Juliana, my dear! (said she, in a voice far less soft than that with which she was wont to address her,) I want to speak to you. Mrs. Martin, too, has something to say to you; and as she must leave us to-morrow morning, you will have no other opportunity of attending her. Henry looked unwilling
to

to trust his lovely charge in her hands ; but our heroine, drawing her hand from under his arm, Will you be good enough to excuse me ? (said she, with a smile of sweetness :) you will meet us again at the end of the great walk. Mr. Maitland is too dutiful a son himself, (said Lady Maitland,) to make it necessary to apologize to him for an act of obedience paid to a mother. I will certainly meet you at the end of the great walk, (said he,) and bowing, went up the close one, from whence they had just issued.

He was no sooner out of sight, than Lady Maitland, turning to Juliana, told her, that she had been informing her friend, Mrs. Martin, of the very great offers Lord Belford had lately made her, and that she, as well as herself, was of opinion that she ought by no means to refuse them. She then ran on with a long catalogue of the amazing advantages she

she would reap by accepting them, ending with the observation, that from his age and infirmities it was not likely Lord Belford should live long, and in case of his death, she would be the richest widow in the kingdom, besides possessing the rank and dignity of a Countess, which she would still continue to possess, though she should afterwards marry a man of inferior rank. As for instance now, (continued her Ladyship,) he who is just parted from us, who if it were not for his want of rank and fortune, is really a fine young fellow enough; should you take it into your head to marry him, you would have riches enough for both, might be happy with the man you loved, and rank as a Countess into the bargain. Juliana's heart revolted against a mother who could press such advice upon a daughter. She had scarce command enough of her temper to answer with

calmness. She mentioned something about the sacredness and duties of marriage, which she declared she would not dare to violate, though by so doing she might become a queen, and command all that the world esteems desirable. At the conclusion of which, Lady Maitland and Mrs. Martin burst into a loud laugh, declaring they had not heard such old-fashion stuff a long time, the former begging of her to modernize her notions a little, and not be so completely ridiculous. Mrs. Martin, composing her features into an affected smile of softness, said she was sorry to find a young lady of her beauty and great expectations, likely to suffer so much from the unfortunate imbibement of false principles and common prejudices: adding, that she must have been very ill educated for her situation in life, or she never could have entertained such vulgar and improper notions. Juliana answered

answered with great calmness, that such were her principles from whatever cause implanted, and till they could be proved false by something stronger than an unsupported assertion, she should certainly act in conformity to them. But were my opinions quite unsettled, (continued she,) my inclinations would upon the present occasion be a sufficient guide, and would most assuredly fix me in a steady rejection of Lord Belford.

The anger which Lady Maitland had before but ill concealed, now burst forth without restraint or moderation: she upbraided Juliana with folly, obstinacy, undutifulness, and ingratitude; concluding with saying, that she plainly saw from whence her dislike to Lord Belford took its rise; that undoubtedly Henry Maitland, a young fellow without rank, fortune, expectation, or any thing that could give him a right to look up to a woman of fashion, would
be

be an excellent match for her, and that she congratulated his mother upon the success of her scheme, which every body but a mere fool, or a romantic girl, must see through.

Juliana could ill endure to hear the slightest reflection upon the character or conduct of Mrs. Maitland. The blood animated her cheek, and a thousand severe repartees presented themselves to silence the low envy and malice, by which, what now offended her was dictated; but she had taught her heart upon all occasions to prefer the obligations of duty, which she thought nothing could wholly obliterate, to the gratification of passion, though excited by the worthiest motives: she therefore suppressed her feelings, and only replied, that Mrs. Maitland was the best of women, and incapable of art or meanness of any kind; that her resolution to refuse her hand to Sir George had been taken long

before it was communicated to her or any other, and that as her fortune was sufficiently large, even after its division, to gratify every reasonable desire, she thought herself at liberty, under certain restrictions of prudence and propriety, to make her own election; and that in an affair of such importance, in which the happiness of her whole life was so nearly concerned, she would neither be swayed by avarice or vanity.

Then neither my advice or consent is to be asked, (cried Lady Maitland;) I am not to be consulted; so Mrs. Maitland's approbation is secured, all is well. But mark me, Juliana, my power over you extends perhaps further than you imagine. Observe my words:—you shall never have my consent to marry any but Lord Belford, and upon my consent depends more than you are aware of.

Our

Our heroine assured her that every respect and act of obedience that she could render her, without violating her own principles, or sacrificing her happiness, she might at all times command; but beyond that, she hoped her duty would never be taxed, since further she possessed not the right or power of performance. It is very well, (replied Lady Maitland, with increasing anger;) but be assured that I possess power to enforce your obedience far beyond the narrow limits you mention; and obeyed I will be, or your ingratitude and folly shall be punished as it deserves.—She pronounced these words with so much passion, that Juliana, who had never suspected her of much warmth of temper, and was wholly at a loss to conjecture the meaning of her words, was seriously alarmed, not being able to account for the strange violence and absurdity of her behaviour any way, but

by supposing that her reason was a little disordered. She well knew that her fortune was left by the late Sir George Maitland, wholly independent of his wife, of whom, indeed, his opinion was too mean to suffer him to intrust either her person or education to her management. She therefore esteemed her threats as little better than ravings. She was at a loss how to answer them, or Mrs. Martin's persuasions, which that officious lady was using to induce her to follow her mother's advice, which she assured her was all for her good, and the very best that could be offered; when drawing near to the spot where she had appointed Henry to meet them, she saw him approach.

Never did the poor, fatigued, half-starved inhabitants of a besieged town, feel more joy, when the distant shouts of a friendly army coming to their relief, first reached their ears, than did
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our heroine, when the sight of her lover gave her hopes of being delivered from the storm of rage, and unreasonable pretension, to which she had, since he left her, been exposed. Lady Maitland observing the pleasure that brightened in her countenance, exclaimed, It is very well ma'am! act as you think proper: but once more mark my words, if ever you marry that young man, ruin is the consequence; and when it falls upon you, do not blame me, or say, I did not warn you of your danger! So saying, she took hold of Mrs. Martin's arm, and they turned up a path which led into a part of the park, directly opposite to that from whence Henry was approaching; leaving Juliana to relate to him at leisure, the strange arguments, and threats, her Ladyship had been making use of; the latter of which, as she was fully convinced they never would be at-

tended by the power of execution, gave her no other pain, but as they were proofs of the unreasonable violence of her temper, and the weakness of her understanding.

They had not walked far, before they were joined by Mrs. and Miss Mor-dant, Miss Windsor, and Sir Harry. The latter lady immediately began to tell Henry, how she had served Lord Belford. You had scarce left us, (said she,) before I complained to him, that the pain in my ankle was very much increased, and begged that he would excuse my returning back, and pursue his walk. I knew he could not help offering to attend me, which he accordingly did, and I chose not to press him to leave me again, lest he should take me at my word; so back we turned, and I pretended to walk lame, till we came opposite to a seat that stands under a great tree, and then I told him, if it

was

was not disagreeable to him, I would rest a little while; he could not refuse, so down we sat. There did I exert all my conversable abilities in order to amuse him, but in vain; the insensible wretch asked me several times, if I did not find myself sufficiently rested. So as I could not entertain, I resolved to plague him, and therefore told him, that the place in which we were seated, was so pleasant, and his Lordship's company so extremely agreeable, that I felt not the smallest inclination to move; and if he had no objection, we would continue there, till the rest of the party had finished their walk. Do you know, (proceeded she,) that he had the rudeness to ask me, if I was not afraid of catching cold, and to discover actual signs of impatience; during the whole time we were together, he never said one civil thing, though I more than once endeavoured to force some out of

him; and the moment this company joined us, he slipped away, and went into the house by himself, actually in a downright ill-humour.

It is a great pity, (answered Henry,) that so much trouble should be thrown away; but I fear you gave yourself too much; had you taken less, you might have succeeded better, for we men like a little trouble ourselves. You are an impertinent creature, (replied Miss Windsor;) however, you are secure from that inconvenience, nobody will give themselves much trouble about a poor younger brother. You do well enough just for creditable dangles, but any thing further, you have no kind of chance for. Then we are in that respect, (answered he,) more fortunate than our elders, since we are less liable to be teased by the giddy, or duped by the artful. And pray in which of these two classes do you rank me? (said Miss Windsor.)

Windfor.) Certainly not among the artful, (answered he :) art implies something concealed, something that is unsuspected, and likely to promote a design. Thank ye, friend, thank ye, (exclaimed Miss Windfor;) if you have not the rank and fortune of an elder brother, you at least possess as much easy assurance as the best of them.

This kind of chat brought them back to the house, at the door of which, Sir Harry Windfor's coach being in waiting, that gentleman and his sister took leave, in doing which, the latter shook Mrs. and Miss Mordant by the hand, telling them, she should expect to see them very soon, and offering the same mark of friendliness to Henry, added, and if he behaves well, you may bring this saucy creature with you. She was then stepping into the coach, without taking the least notice of Juliana, when her brother, who attributed her rude-

ness to inattention, gently pulling her back, said, My dear you have forgot to invite Miss Maitland; upon which, making our heroine a very slight curtsy, she replied, that she hoped Mrs. Mordant knew she was always glad to see any one that made a part of her family. So saying she got into the carriage, which, as soon as the master of it had placed himself by her side, drove away. It was no sooner out of sight, than Miss Mordant turning to Juliana, asked her, if she did not think Miss Windfor a remarkably sensible, agreeable woman? I do not think her remarkably any thing, (answered she:) except, (rejoined Henry, who had remarked her behaviour to Juliana, during the whole day,) rude, envious, vain, and affected; those, in my opinion, are the leading traits in her character, and if they are compatible with understanding and elegance of manners, Miss Wind-

for

for may possess both. Oh fie! (cried Miss Mordant,) how can you be so ungrateful, when you know you are one of her greatest favourites.!

While she was yet speaking, they were joined by Lord Belford, Mr. Mordant, and Albert. The latter immediately enquired for Miss Windsor, and upon hearing that she was gone home, exclaimed, Aye, Maitland, now you are here she cares for nobody else under the rank of a Viscount. When you are absent, and we have no titles among us, I come in for a part of her favours, but this whole day I have in vain watched for a single smile; they were all divided between Lord Belford and you. Miss Windsor is a fine woman, (said Lord Belford,) but her charms begin to wear rather a matronly appearance; she would look better as my Lady, or Mrs. than as Miss. Then, (replied Albert, in an audible whisper,) I believe I can answer

for its being in your Lordship's power to give her that advantage, as soon as you think proper. For shame, Albert, (cried Mrs. Mordant, smiling.) To be sure, (said her daughter,) she is not quite so much a girl as she was twenty years since, not that I believe she is herself at all sensible of the change. But sensible of it she shortly must be, (answered Henry;) wrinkles and grey hairs tell unequivocal truths.

They were by this time seated in the drawing-room, where Henry taking out his pocket-case and pencil, wrote the following lines, which he presented to Mrs. Mordant.

SONNET to the LOOKING-GLASS;

In the Character of a Beauty on the Verge of
Forty.

COME, faithful friend, my toilet grace;
Thee truth attends, and flatterers fly;
Still thou presentest nature's face,
Tho' vain self-love averts the eye.

This hour with pleas'd regard I gaze,
Fresh bloom and chearful smiles appear;

The next I start in coy amaze,
For ah! approaching age is there.

In thee I read that spring is past,
That gaudy summer's end is near;

That autumn grave, approaches fast,
And winter soon will close the year.

Ah! ere that hour, be every folly fled;
So wisdom's sacred crown shall grace my hoary
head!

CHAPTER XXV.

THE VISIT.

THE heart of Juliana was sincere and open, she possessed real delicacy, but despised the affectation of it, as she did indeed every species of that disgusting quality. Her acquaintance with Henry had commenced with her earliest knowledge of herself, his character was in every respect what she approved, his manners were particularly agreeable to her, she respected his understanding, and admired his person. In short, she loved him, and had every possible reason to believe that he returned her affection; she was opulent, and independent, nor was there any obstacle to their union strong enough, to
render

render its completion a matter of doubt or hesitation. Thus situated, she did not scruple to acknowledge to the lover her heart had chosen, that he wholly possessed it. Nor did she absolutely reject his suit, when declaring that he should not enjoy a moment of solid peace till his happiness was put out of even a possibility of doubt, he earnestly pressed her to become his without waiting the four tedious months which intervened between that, and the time of her coming of age; proposing that they should, till the arrival of that period, reside at Furze-Hill with his mother, whose consent was, by the late Sir George's will, alone necessary to her marriage. Though she had not quite promised this, she had consented to return to Furze-Hill immediately after the races were over; to which she thought herself obliged to attend Mrs. Mordant, who made a point of enlarging her party as much as possible.

possible. She was not indeed sorry to think of leaving Mordant-Place, which the particularity of Lord Belford, and the ill-humour of Lady Maitland rendered less agreeable to her, than it would otherwise have been. The only circumstance which caused her any regret was the thought of leaving Lady Frances Seward, who every day became more dear to her. To this valued friend she had acknowledged her attachment to Henry, and at her particular request had introduced him to her at one of their breakfast meetings in the bathing-house. Henry was charmed with the noble simplicity and polished gracefulness of Lady Frances's manners, and she, with a sigh, acknowledged that he appeared as worthy of her lovely young friend as any man could be. And promised, that as soon as they were settled in a domestic way, and all the hurry and ceremonies consequent upon a marriage

were

were over, she would make them a long and friendly visit, during which she hoped to become acquainted with Mrs. Maitland and Mary, and to induce them all to return with her to Clareville-House, which she said, was generally thought pleasant, and which she would do every thing in her power to render so upon that occasion.

When a woman feels a real affection for her lover, and has acknowledged that affection, she will find it difficult to refuse him any thing, which is not forbidden by honour or reason. Her acknowledgment in his favour encourages him to press with fervour what he would otherwise scarce venture to mention, while it weakens her power of resistance, and renders compliance almost an act of duty. It is not therefore surprising, that having so little to oppose to the warm intreaties of one so confessedly dear to her, our heroine should

should in the course of a few days be persuaded to consent to all he proposed, which she did, however, upon condition that it was perfectly approved of by Msr. Maitland. Should that be the case, it was agreed that she should remain only one week at Mordant-Place after their return from the races; that Henry should at the expiration of that time come back, and conduct her home; and that a few days after her arrival there, their marriage should take place.

Every one at Mordant-Place, except Lady Maitland and Lord Belford, did and said all in their power to persuade Henry to accompany them upon their intended excursion; but rich in hope, the impatient lover was not to be persuaded to any thing that might for a single day postpone the completion of it. The very morning after he had obtained the above mentioned promise from her upon whom his happiness so much

much depended, he set out for Furze-Hill, in order to obtain his mother's consent to the arrangement he had planned, and prepare every thing necessary for his nuptials.

Lady Maitland appeared highly pleased by Henry's departure, nor was Lord Belford less satisfied. The former embraced every opportunity of teasing Juliana about the Peer, constantly representing the great advantages she would gain by a marriage with him, and regularly concluding with declaring that she would one day repent her folly, and wish she had followed the advice of her friends, without obliging them to exert their authority in order to bring her to a sense of her duty, which if she continued obstinate, they were determined to do. Our heroine being convinced that she had not the smallest power over her actions, heard these threats with no more concern than every instance

instance of her Ladyship's folly gave her. She made little reply to them, only begging that she would not continue to press her upon a subject to which she could not attend without disgust, or request what, however painful to her, she must absolutely refuse.

Finding, upon enquiry, that Lady Maitland had neglected to inform Miss Mordant of her resolution to resign Woodburn-Manor to Sir George, she took the first opportunity which presented itself for giving her that agreeable piece of intelligence, and the extreme satisfaction which appeared in her countenance while she was receiving it, convinced our heroine that the account she had heard of her expectations from the young Baronet were true. The sudden pleasure which this information afforded her, opened Miss Mordant's heart, naturally close and reserved; she talked a great deal more than she was usually

usually accustomed to do, and among other communications, told Juliana, that they should not be at home again, for near a month after the races; that it was intended to make a considerable tour, and to go, as by accident, to Belford-Abbey, where they were to remain at least a fortnight, and be entertained in the most sumptuous manner. Among other amusements, they were to have a splendid fête; that orders had already been sent down to prepare for it; in short, (continued she,) we shall spend a most delightful fortnight, for Belford-Abbey is one of the most beautiful places in the kingdom, and stands in the midst of a very genteel neighbourhood, which will, upon this occasion, be all gathered together; nor will any thing be wanting that can possibly afford pleasure, for nothing can equal Lord Belford's taste but his magnificence. But dear Miss Maitland, do not

say a word about it, you were not to know any thing of the affair; indeed the principal design of it was to surprise you. Lord Belford only consulted your mother upon it, and she told me in confidence; neither Mrs. Mordant, Albert, Miss Windsor, or Sir Harry, have heard a syllable of his intention.

You must pardon me if I cannot make you any such promise, (answered Juliana;) I am resolved not to make one of the party to the races, and must beg leave to declare the true cause why I decline to go; otherwise Mrs. Mordant might think me rude and capricious; but I will mention it only to her and my mother, nor will tell them by what means I acquired my information. Miss Mordant said every thing she could think on that was likely to induce her to accompany them; not that she particularly wished for her presence at the races, where she rather feared her as an
over-

overpowering rival, but she feared her staying behind would put an end to the Belford-Abbey scheme, and heartily wished she had possessed caution enough to keep the design from her knowledge, as Lady Maitland had requested her to do. Finding it in vain to attempt to overcome her objections to the visit at Belford, she begged that she would be as good as her word in not telling from whom she received the information; though, (added she,) as Lady Maitland has informed none but me, she will not want to be told; however, I shall take care, Miss Maitland, how I next intrust you with a secret.

Miss Mordant had no sooner left our heroine, than she began to consider in what manner she should dispose of herself during the time that her mother and friends would be absent. At first she thought of returning to Furze-Hill; but delicacy, or something which she
chose

chose to distinguish by that name, absolutely forbid it. The next plan which presented itself, was that of passing it with Lady Frances Seward, and to this, as Sir Charles Hastings was to be of the party to the races, she foresaw no prevention, unless one should arise on her Ladyship's part, which she did not expect; it was however necessary to be certain of this, as she had no doubt but the strongest objections would be made to the impropriety of her remaining alone at Mordant-Place. She therefore informed her, the following morning, of the discovery she had made, and her consequent resolution not to make one in the intended excursion. Of this Lady Frances intirely approved, telling her young friend that she should greatly have blamed her, resolved as she was upon rejecting Lord Belford's addresses, if she had given him so good an opportunity of teasing her, and as the world might

might possibly think, laying her under obligations for entertainments given on her account, though not with her consent. Then looking at her with an inviting smile, Where does my dear Juliana mean to spend her time while the family at Mordant-Place are absent? Will Lady Frances Seward permit me to pass it with her at Marley? (answered our heroine.) Sir Charles is engaged to accompany Mr. Mordant, therefore my being with her can be no impropriety. And will you then make me so happy? (cried Lady Frances.) I shall be very happy indeed! and, which I had little cause to expect, owe that happiness to Lord Belford. More was not necessary; Juliana returned highly pleased with the thoughts of spending the next fortnight with Lady Frances, rather than at the races, which she would greatly have preferred, had the visit to Belford-Abbey never been projected.

The only person she found in the breakfast room upon her return, was Mrs. Mordant. She took the opportunity of her being alone, to let her know that having, by a particular accident, discovered that they were to be surpris'd into a visit to Belford-Abbey in the course of their intended excursion, she was determin'd to avoid so unpleasant a circumstance, by remaining behind, and passing the time of their absence with Lady Frances Seward, who would be quite alone, as Sir Charles Hastings was to make one of their party. I need not ask how you came by your intelligence, (said Mrs. Mordant,) I have no doubt but Eliza was your informer; for though she is in general reserved, and rather silent, she never could keep any thing that resembled a secret: not that Lady Maitland has made much of this, for to Eliza I know she has told the whole design; upon me she has con-

ferred

ferred the same favour; from Albert she can keep nothing; and I have great reason to believe, that Miss Windfor, if not Sir Harry, are upon this occasion made confidants; so that you are the only one of the party that would have been surpris'd, had the scheme been put into execution. Juliana blush'd for her mother's weakness, there was scarce an hour in which she had not cause to blush on this account. Mrs. Mordant observing her confusion, politely added, You know, my dear Miss Maitland, it was of no consequence to the intention who was made acquainted with it, provided it remained a secret to you; indeed I was half inclined to tell you myself, for I did not think it quite fair that you should be so deceived; but I seldom intermeddle in their plans; in general Lady Maitland and the young folks project, and I follow the stream.

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Your

Your wish to have me informed upon this occasion, (said Juliana,) proves that you are of my opinion with respect to the impropriety of my going to Belford, therefore I am sure you will have goodness enough to join with me in persuading my mother to consent to my staying behind. Just as she pronounced these words Lady Maitland entered, and being informed of our heroine's resolution, and the cause of its being taken, flew into a more violent passion than either of those present had ever beheld her in. Mrs. Mordant said every thing that she thought might tend to calm her rage, at the same time declaring, that as Miss Maitland had resolved never to marry Lord Belford, it would be very wrong to make him such a visit.

Resolved not to marry him! (cried Lady Maitland,) she is resolved upon no such thing; she will yet be glad to marry him. Nay, I will venture to say she shall

shall marry him. These words excited a smile from Mrs. Mordant, and a look of concern from Juliana, who could not reconcile them to any thing reasonable; and really began to fear, both from them and the violence of her agitations, that her mother was subject to short fits of insanity. At length her Ladyship, after upbraiding our heroine with obstinacy, folly, ingratitude, and undutifulness, left the room, telling her that she might upon this occasion follow her own inclinations, but at her return she would soon convince her that it was both her duty and interest to be guided by her's.

During the two days which intervened between this conversation and that fixed upon for the beginning of their journey, Lady Maitland was too busy in her preparations for the races to have much time for reproaches and ill-humour; the arrival of her new dress was in every

respect exactly what she could have wished, and the readiness with which Juliana discharged the bill, (which was not a small one,) a little mollified the harshness of her looks, so that our heroine suffered less from her resentment than she expected to have done. As for Lord Belford he appeared extremely disappointed by the failure of a scheme, upon which he had rested much of his hopes : he began to grow less attentive to the professed object of his passion, talked of the beauties they would be likely to see at the races, and seemed desirous of politely dropping the character of a lover, which he plainly perceived would, in spite of all his efforts, prove an unsuccessful one.

Upon the morning appointed for their setting out, our heroine arose with much alacrity, and prepared for her temporary removal to Marley. Having given directions to her maid about the things she

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she should want during her stay there, they were placed in a caravan box, and orders given to her footman to bring them to her in the afternoon. She had taken leave of the family the preceding evening, had sincerely wished them all those pleasures of which she felt not the smallest wish to partake, and was just setting out for the bathing house, where Lady Frances had promised to meet, and from thence conduct her home, when she was met by Sir Charles Hastings. His looks were paler than usual, and very grave; she had not seen him since their meeting at the place to which she was now going, and the change his countenance had undergone was very perceptible. She could not look at him without concern: ah! (she inwardly exclaimed,) how can I hope for the friendship of Lady Frances, while I destroy the happiness of one so dear to her.

He approached her with a respectful and tender, but real melancholy air. How good you are, (said he,) my dear Miss Maitland, to favour my aunt with your company! How happy will she be during my absence! He spoke the last words with a strong emphasis, and accompanied them with a sigh, which seemed to issue from the bottom of his heart. I am happy, Sir, (answered Juliana,) in the opportunity which the absence of Mr. Mordant's family affords me of giving myself the honour to pass a few days with Lady Frances. I hope you will have a great deal of amusement at Stanton.—She was proceeding, when, suddenly interrupting her,—I am not sufficiently at ease, (said he,) to find much enjoyment in any thing. But may you be happy! If my best wishes could contribute to your felicity, you would never feel a single pain. So saying, he bowed, and hurried from her in much
 apparent

apparent disorder of spirits. The moment he left her, she pursued her walk to the bathing-house, attended by her maid, and about a quarter of a mile from it met Lady Frances and her woman. They immediately formed two parties, and after strolling for about an hour to enjoy the sweet freshness of the morning, breakfasted in the calm retreat they were so fond of, and having spent a considerable part of the morning there, Lady Frances's coach conveyed them to the house, the morning being become too hot to admit of walking without fatigue.

Upon the first day after our heroine's removal to Marley she received a packet of letters from Furze-Hill. It contained one from Mrs. Maitland, in which, after many expressions of the truest maternal tenderness, she told her, that since she found that it was her absolute resolution to honour her family by becoming the

wife of her happy Henry, she should endeavour to harden herself against the reflections which the envy of the world would probably cast upon her, and contented with the conscious rectitude of her own heart, joyfully consent to what she hoped would insure her happiness, though it would not place her in the sphere of life she had a right to move in. Mary expressed the highest delight in the thought of calling her sister, and the approaching happiness of her favorite brother. She intreated her to shorten her absence as much as possible, declaring that she should think of nothing else till her return to Furze-Hill. In short, her letter breathed the warm spirit of youthful friendship, uncorrupted by that mean and selfish disposition, which, unable to view even qualities which most excite esteem without jealousy and envy, those certain destroyers of amity and affection, render
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female attachments so generally weak and short lived. The epistle from Henry was such as might be expected from such a man, in such a situation. He concluded by informing her that he should without fail be at Mordant-Place upon the appointed day; and that his mother and sister would meet her half way upon her return, at a very good Inn, where they might be well accommodated for the night, instead of fatiguing her, by performing the whole journey in one day. To this Juliana felt no objection, every place, in the company of those she so much loved, appearing to her safe and pleasant.

During the first week of her visit to Lady Frances, nothing occurred that can furnish matter for relation. Every hour increased that esteem and admiration which she before thought scarce capable of increase, nor could any thing but the hope of again seeing her beloved

friends at Furze-Hill have reconciled her to the thought of so soon quitting a society in which her heart was become so deeply interested. Lady Frances was one day comparing the retired, still life her lovely young friend led with her, with the gay bustle in which she supposed her mother and the Mordants were engaged; and concluded with saying, there are few at your age, and fitted as you are to shine in the first parties, who would have made such a choice. Yet, (replied Juliana,) my dear Lady Frances is not among those who ought to wonder at such a conduct; are not you younger than Mrs. Mordant or Lady Maitland? yet while they pursue every thing that bears the name of amusement with avidity, you shrink back, and appear to avoid even those that press themselves upon you. Ah! my dear Miss Maitland, (answered her Ladyship,) you will, I trust, never experience

perience such disappointments as have given me a disgust to the world, and changed a temper, naturally gay and active, into the reverse of both. I will in a few words account to you for this change, though in so doing I shall lay open an affair which is a secret to Sir Charles Hastings himself. I will not apologize to my fair friend for the follies and imprudencies I have been guilty of, I know her candour will view them in the most favourable light, and the censure I have deserved I must submit to bear.

My father, the late Earl of Clareville, was a man who possessed many worthy qualities; he was sincere in his attachments, generous to his dependents, and a strict observer of the rules of what the world calls honour, which he never violated himself, or suffered any one with whom he was in any degree connected, to infringe with impunity.

nity. He had in the younger part of his life served in the army with considerable reputation, and would probably have risen to the first command had he not been detached from the pursuit of military glory by his passion for my mother, of whom he was excessively fond, and whose slightest wish was, throughout the whole time during which they lived together, an absolute law to him.

This unbounded influence she had obtained over his affections, partly by her uncommon beauty, accomplishments and understanding, and partly by her high rank, and the consideration of the very ancient and illustrious family from which she was descended; she being one of the daughters of the late, and sister to the present Duke of Roxford, an alliance with whom, exclusive of her extraordinary merits, flattered his pride, of which he possessed a much larger share than

than the most exalted and splendid condition of human life can justify or even excuse. Indeed excessive pride and boundless ambition were the leading traits in his character, and not only shaded his better qualities, but to those most near to him, and who had a natural claim to be benefited by them, rendered them absolutely useless.

The great interest of my mother's family, together with his own, raised him to the first posts in the late administration, of which his father-in-law was considered as the leader and principal support ; and the integrity and ability with which he filled them, acquired him at once the approbation of his sovereign, and the confidence of his fellow-citizens, though the extreme haughtiness of his manners disqualified him for ever from obtaining their affection.

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with five children, of whom I was the youngest; two girls died in their infancy, which was matter of little regret to him, he having placed his whole hopes and affections upon his son, who was the eldest, and in every respect a most promising boy, both in person and understanding. The care and superintendence of his education divided his attention even with politics and the duties of his office; the best masters in every branch of polite attainment were engaged to instruct him, and a gentleman, whose abilities, learning, and knowledge were in the very first class, was induced by a more than commonly generous establishment, to take upon himself the character of his preceptor. As for my sister and myself he concerned himself very little about us; indeed we were almost strangers to him; for when his time was not taken up in the duties of his post, and attendance at
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the house of Peers or St. James's, he was almost constantly surrounded by company, so that we were intirely left to the care and regulations of our mother, whose attentions to our health, comfort, and improvements were unre-mitted, and whose tenderness made us amends for the want of it in our father.

As my brother grew up, the hopes of my father, as well as every part of our family, were exceedingly flattered by the favourable accounts given of him by his tutor; the rapid improvements he made in his various studies, the fineness of his person, clearness of his understanding, and agreeableness of his manners. Lord Clareville already beheld him in idea a minister of state, the favourite of his sovereign, the admiration of the court, and raised to the highest dignities which rank, fortune, and reputation have power to bestow. In order to insure, as far as human prudence

dence can influence events, his future consequence in life, he entered into an agreement with my uncle, who by the death of his father was become Duke of Roxford, by which it was resolved, that as soon as they became of a proper age, a marriage should take place between my brother and his Grace's daughter, who being his only child, and heiress to his vast possessions, was a circumstance to which he looked forward as to the completion of his almost every wish.

As the young people advanced in age, a growing attachment appeared between them, which was attentively watched and encouraged by their respective parents; our families were almost continually together, and every hour that my brother could spare from his studies, was devoted to little entertainments and parties of amusement, in which my sister and I always shared. My mother,
who

who was extremely fond of her niece, had fixed her heart upon the completion of the projected marriage, as strongly as my father; and in all the parties that were made in compliment to my cousin, she carefully excluded every young man or woman in the neighbourhood of Clareville, (which abounds with the families of gentlemen of fortune,) who were likely in the smallest degree to rival either her or my brother in the opinion of the other. There was, indeed, as little danger of such an event as could well be desired, for I have already observed, that he was more than commonly amiable, and she was one of the most accomplished young women in the kingdom, possessed of an excellent understanding, great sweetness of temper, and though her person could not be stiled beautiful, it was perfectly agreeable and pleasing.

During

During the time my brother spent abroad, a frequent and regular correspondence was kept up between them. It was resolved that at his return the marriage should immediately take place. His letters expressed the most ardent impatience for the arrival of this wished-for period; and Lady Jane, though remarkable for the delicacy, and almost reservedness of her general manners, openly acknowledged that it would give her sincere pleasure to see him again. As for my father, so impatient was he to behold the completion of an event which he considered not only as a very great present honour and advantage to his family, but as a step which must certainly lead his son to the highest situations a subject could enjoy, that fearful lest any unforeseen accident should frustrate his hopes, he resolved upon recalling him some months sooner than had been

been agreed upon when he quitted the kingdom.

My brother readily obeyed the welcome summons, and in a few weeks after it had been received, arrived at Clareville, to the inexpressible joy of his parents, and the great pleasure of the whole neighbourhood, by whom he was generally beloved. Every preparation for his intended nuptials had been made previous to his return; an elegant feat which my uncle resigned to him, was fitted up in the most superb stile, and the grounds around it laid out with all the beauty and variety of which they were capable. A house of my father's in St. James's Square, had likewise been prepared for their reception, the writings, &c. were ready drawn, and nothing neglected that could facilitate an event from which so much happiness was expected.

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I have often thought that the passionate impatience with which my father had expected this union, the unwearied pains he had taken to insure it, and the excessive pleasure he expressed upon its taking place exactly according to his own plan, is a most striking instance, among many I have since remarked, which tends to prove, how very ill the wisest and most prudent are qualified to ascertain, with any tolerable degree of certainty, what will insure their own felicity. Often the attainment of our wishes in its effects, destroys the object which they too ardently desired to secure; a lesson, which were it possible for a man ever to profit by the experience of others, should teach us moderation in our most favourite pursuits, and submission to the will and destinations of that perfectly wise and good Being, who so often renders disappointment a blessing, and not less frequently punishes

punishes our folly in its gratification. The latter of these was eventually his case with my father. For so perfectly satisfied was my brother with the situation in which his marriage had placed him, so happy in the enjoyment of domestic felicity, and the exertions of private benevolence, that no efforts of his father's could awaken in his bosom a single spark of ambition, or the least desire of distinguishing himself in public life. His wife, of whom he was passionately fond, was as much attached to retirement and domestic pleasures as himself; they passed almost their whole time in the country, seldom spending more than three or four months every winter in London, and at the conclusion of that short season returning to the enjoyments of nature and reason with increased eagerness and satisfaction.

It was in vain that my father represented to his son the extreme folly, as
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he esteemed it, of which he was guilty in thus neglecting the opportunities he possessed of rendering himself of the first importance in the state, opportunities which the strength of his abilities, and the extent of his information, so well qualified him to embrace with every possible degree of advantage to himself, and glory to his family; my brother answered that he was perfectly satisfied with the family honours already acquired by his ancestors, honours, which no action of his should ever tarnish; that he found in the various duties of private life sufficient employment for the abilities which nature had endowed him with; and as he had no doubt, but that his native country, which no man could love more sincerely than himself, would at all times produce men equally and much better fitted to preserve and multiply her national glories, he did not, as a good citizen, think

think himself obliged to relinquish the happy plan of domestic felicity he had laid down, and was beginning to enjoy ; but on the contrary, that he believed himself to be more effectually serving her true interests by setting an example of moral rectitude, extensive benevolence, and an active and regular discharge of all the important duties of private life.

Little as my father could urge in reply to arguments founded upon truth and reason, he was by no means satisfied with his son's conduct ; on the contrary, it disappointed all his most favourite hopes, to the fulfilling of which he looked upon his marriage only as a leading step. But his mortification was greatly increased, or rather was completed, by his want of children, a circumstance which so strongly affected his mind, that he lost all pleasure in the possession of those dignities, for the acquisition of which his youth had been

spent in toil, and his manhood in care and anxiety. He suddenly threw up his post, quitted the court in disgust, and retired to Clareville, declaring it as his unalterable resolution never more to visit those scenes of delusion, false greatness, and fancied enjoyment.

My mother used every means in her power to divert his chagrin, and render his retirement chearful and pleasing: but though he always preserved towards her the utmost tenderness and respect, a gloomy, unsocial temper of mind had taken absolute possession of him, which intirely unfitted him for the enjoyment either of solitude or domestic comfort; the sight of my brother, or his lady, always appeared to give him pain; and as neither my sister, or myself, could transmit his name to posterity, he regarded us with the most perfect indifference.

Much

Much of Harriet's time was passed at the house of our brother, where I, who was seven years younger, was sometimes permitted to accompany her, a privilege which the agreeable manner of living there, (the chearfulness, elegance, and social freedom of which formed a most pleasing contrast to the stately gloom which prevailed at Clareville,) rendered at all times very acceptable.

Among the agreeable and well informed people of both sexes who visited my brother, the person who appeared most particularly to possess his friendship was the late Sir Philip Hastings, a character adorned by every quality that could dignify a man, or distinguish a gentleman. The agreeableness of his person and manners first attracted the approbation of my sister, which a more intimate knowledge of his virtues improved into esteem and admiration. Her admiration was returned, a mutual liking was

quickly softened and refined into love; which for some time was carefully concealed by both, even from each other, one being actuated by motives of delicacy and reserve, the other by prudence and fear. He well knew the character of the Earl of Clareville, and neither his rank or fortune, the latter being very small, could afford him just ground to hope, that one whose pride and ambition had in every instance been the ruling motives of his actions, would so far deviate from them, as to bestow his daughter, the presumptive heiress to a large portion of his vast wealth, upon one so much beneath her in both. In despite of the constraint my sister imposed upon herself, of the care she took to conceal the favourable thoughts she entertained of the Baronet from every one, they were observed by Lord Seward, who at the same time equally remarked the more than common attention paid

to her by his friend. His knowledge of Sir Philip was the most intimate. They had travelled together, and their friendship, which similarity of manners and sentiments had begun, was cemented by virtue and true honour. There was nothing my brother would more have wished, than to have seen Harriet the wife of his friend. And the very little regard his father had ever shown either for her or me, encouraged him to hope, that if he was acquainted with his excellent character, and found that the affections of his daughter were absolutely engaged, he might be prevailed upon by the intreaties of himself and his mother, whose interest he knew would easily be obtained, to consent to their marriage.

In this hope he questioned his friend upon the discovery he believed himself to have made, in such a manner as induced him to acknowledge the whole truth. He declared that the regard he

felt for Lady Harriet, was such as he never had, or could entertain for any other; but conscious of the small pretensions he had to hope for the blessing of her hand with the consent and approbation of her family, he had resolved never to mention his unfortunate passion to her, or any other, but to endeavour by absence, and a proper exertion of resolution, to conquer an attachment, which, if preserved, must destroy his future peace.

My brother assured Sir Philip that nothing in his power should be omitted that could in any degree contribute to promote his happiness and that of his sister, by whom he had reason to believe his merits had not been wholly overlooked. The Baronet was enraptured by the faintest ray of hope; he seized the hand of Lord Seward, and in terms of the warmest gratitude thanked him for the unexpected, and as he esteemed it,
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unreturnable proof of friendship he had given him. Their conversation ended in my brother's promising, that if he was so fortunate as to obtain Harriet's consent, he would immediately introduce him to his father; and that nothing should be left unattempted that might afford the smallest hope of obtaining his approbation.

An acknowledgment of my sister's regard for the Baronet was not difficult to obtain. Encouraged by the discovery of her brother's sentiments, she easily prevailed upon herself to declare her own, and it was resolved upon that an early opportunity should be embraced, to request my mother's consent to the proposed marriage, and her interest with my father; for upon the great influence she enjoyed with him, and the still greater which her son possessed over her, the whole hopes of the lovers depended.

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In this state were my sister's expectations when an express arrived from Clareville with an account of the sudden death of my mother, an event which filled us all with inexpressible sorrow, and for the present banished even from the mind of my sister every thought but of her loss. She set out immediately, accompanied by my brother, his lady, and myself, for the seat of mourning, where upon our arrival we found my father in a state nearly bordering upon distraction, nor for several days after the funeral of our beloved parent were we in a proper condition to offer comfort, or he to receive it. Our loss was indeed very great, for she was the tenderest of mothers, and by the kind indulgence with which she treated us, compensated for the want of it in our father; and we feared, and indeed had every cause to fear, that the want of her protection would make a very unpleasant

pleasing change in our situation. But the person who had most cause to be apprehensive of this was poor Harriet, whose attachment to her lover was so greatly strengthened since the knowledge of her brother's sentiments had afforded her room to hope that it might possibly be permitted by parental authority, that she could no more endure the thought of withdrawing her affections from, than she could now hope for her father's consent to bestow them upon him.

Our family had never been accustomed to live in habits of intimacy with those that resided near it, though many of them were of fortune and consequence: the excessive pride of my father had rendered it impossible for him to mix agreeably with any who were at all his inferiors, in what he esteemed of so much importance, rank. Nor were the independent and sensible by any

means, fond of exposing themselves to his contemptuous neglect or supercilious civility. The amiable politeness of my mother's manners was the only charm which could, at any time, induce persons of this description to visit Clareville, and as the Earl had too much understanding to be pleased with common flattery, our house was seldom crowded with guests. It was, indeed, a favorite maxim with him, which, when my sister or I have expressed a wish to mix rather more with some young people in the neighbourhood, he would often repeat for our instruction, that solitude was always preferable to unequal society. This stately solitude we had indeed now the full enjoyment of. Those who were not permitted to share his pleasures, pressed not to partake of or console his sorrows; so that except occasional visits from persons of distinction, we rarely saw or conversed with

with any creature except my brother and his lady, who, out of mere compassion, seldom suffered a week to pass without spending at least one day with us. We were now become necessary to my father, not as objects of affection, but as human creatures, with whom he did not think it beneath his dignity to converse. Having no longer my mother to support his spirits, it became our constant care to amuse him: our endeavours were indeed often unsuccessful; but he found it more agreeable to have us with him than to be alone, and therefore, as he did not esteem our health or inclinations of the least consequence, it was his declared pleasure that we never should leave his apartment together, nor was one of us permitted to be absent for more than half an hour at a time, so that we were deprived of the only enjoyment we had

hoped for, that of sometimes visiting Lord Seward.

To this unpleasant confinement I submitted with patience, but to my sister it was quite intolerable. A great part of her nights, and almost every moment that she was absent from my father's apartments, was spent in tears. She had few opportunities of complaining to my brother, but her pale cheek and languid eyes too expressively declared the state of her mind, at once depressed by a sense of the evils she suffered, and the happiness she believed herself to have lost. We had spent more than two months in this situation, which was every day rendered more irksome, by the increasing gloom and sourness of my father's temper, and were sitting in his dressing-room during one of his frequent fits of silence, which would often last for several hours together, when his valet announced my brother.

brother. My sister and I arose, with our usual alacrity, to receive him, for his visits were our only pleasure; when, judge of our surprise and her joy, when we beheld him enter followed by Sir Philip Hastings. He apologized to my father for the liberty he had taken in introducing his friend, who, he said, he had met in his way to Clareville, and could not, without a breach of common politeness, avoid requesting that he would accompany him. My father received the Baronet, who he had often seen, with a reserved kind of half-civility, during the first part of the day, addressing his whole conversation to his son, and seldom honouring him even with a look. Such treatment would, in other circumstances, quickly have put an end to his visit; for he was a man of spirit, and, notwithstanding the smallness of his fortune, had ever preserved the most perfect independence.

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But he had his own reasons for bearing it upon the present occasion, without the least appearance of resentment, and even courting every possible opportunity of gaining the smallest degree of his attention. By degrees, my father began to grow less reserved, and before the conclusion of the evening, the good sense, respect, and easy politeness of Sir Philip's behaviour and address, so far won upon the little remains of social kindness his temper retained, that he not only entered into conversation with him in a manner tolerably chearful, but, upon his rising to take leave, invited him to repeat his visit, saying, he should be glad to see him as often as would suit his convenience and inclination. A condescension which the Baronet appeared to receive with the most grateful sensibility, and of which, he assured the Earl, he should seize every opportunity to avail himself.

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During the whole day, Sir Philip had neither found, or apparently sought, an opportunity of privately addressing my sister. He had taken no other notice of her than such as politeness demanded. A few expressive looks were all that distinguished the lover. His appearance was, notwithstanding, matter of extreme pleasure to her, and the distinction with which my father had favored him, flattered her with the most agreeable hopes. These hopes were strengthened by the increasing friendship he expressed for him, every visit he paid him appearing to heighten his esteem, and the pleasure he felt in his society. His invitations became more pressing, and the Baronet was seldom more than three or four successive days absent from Clareville. In the course of these constant visits he frequently found opportunities for holding short conversations with Harriet, unobserved by my father; they

they likewise often wrote to each other; all their former hopes were revived; and it was agreed that my brother should, at his next visit, propose the marriage.

The Baronet had just left us, after having concerted with my sister the plan they thought would be most likely to insure the success of their hopes; we were agreeably entertaining ourselves, she with the prospect of recovered freedom and happiness, and I with the expectation of a little temporary relief from confinement, during the gaieties of her wedding, my father being lain down to sleep, when we heard an equipage stop at the door, and in a few minutes a servant announced the Earl of Belford, and his son, Lord Easure. The Earl was an old and intimate friend of my father's, but his son he had never seen since he was a mere boy, he having been wholly educated abroad. They
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were received with the greatest cordiality, and, notwithstanding that the latter was one of the most trifling and finished coxcombs I ever beheld, my father treated him with even distinguished attention, introducing him to my sister and me, as a person to whom it was his wish that we should pay every possible civility.

The young gentleman was not only very plain in his person, weak in his understanding, and affected in his manners, but a great pretender to wit and humour, though nature had absolutely denied him the smallest portion of either. We were at first diverted with his folly, and in a situation so uniformly dull as ours, any thing that could divert was acceptable. It was his practice, while our fathers were conversing together in a different room, or a distant part of that in which we were seated, to entertain us with long
accounts

accounts of his adventures abroad. Himself, and some lady of great beauty and consequence, were generally the hero and heroine of his tales, and we were usually given to understand, that he was extremely admired by the female world, and had achieved many conquests, which would have done honour to the most accomplished follower of the Chesterfieldian system. Indeed, had all the facts of which he was pleased to inform us been authentic, he would well have merited the severest punishment the laws of offended justice and humanity could have had power to inflict; but, as we did not apprehend that it was quite so easy to seduce the affections of a virtuous married woman, deceive the vigilance of a careful father, or scale the walls of a convent, as he represented, we gave him credit for the inventions of at least one half of the villainies of which he pretended to have been

been guilty, and believed that his want of abilities and address had prevented their extending much beyond inclination and unsuccessful attempt. But this belief did not lessen our detestation of his principles, or the extreme disgust and weariness we began to feel in the constant repetitions of these accounts, which at once raised our contempt for his understanding, and hatred of his disposition. The obedience we paid to the directions of our father, in treating him with perfect civility, began to grow very difficult; for we could scarce restrain ourselves from showing him how entirely he was the object of our disdain; when we were suddenly plunged into the utmost consternation and distress, by his informing my sister, that he had her father's permission to address her as a lover, and at the same time adding, that as he found it was the particular wish of both families that an
union

union should take place between them, and knowing that no man could escape his destiny, provided she felt no reluctance, he had resolved to oblige them.

This declaration was followed by an audience with my father, in which he informed her, that Lord Easure was by him resolved upon for her husband, and that he expected her to receive him as such, with all the chearfulness and encouraging politeness which her happy prospects, and his merits demanded. It was in vain that poor Harriet fell at his feet, that she declared the most settled dislike to Lord Easure, and intreated him not to render her the most unhappy of human creatures, by uniting her to one who was so absolutely the object of her aversion. He treated her reluctance as the effect of weakness and folly, and her daring to acknowledge it as a breach of the duty and obedience she was by the unalterable laws of nature bound

to pay him. In short, with much contempt and rage he told her, that he did not send for her to consult her inclinations, but to notify his own; and dismissed her with a command immediately to prepare for her marriage, which he was determined should take place in a few days.

The evening after this dreadful order had been received, my sister, with the permission of her father, passed in her own apartment, a season which he thought proper to afford her for the recovery of her spirits, or as he expressed it, to reflect upon her own folly and bring her mind into a proper state of submission to the commands of her father, which he told her it was both her interest and duty to consider as the voice of heaven. I was not allowed to accompany her, but ordered, when I quitted the eating room, not to be absent more than an hour.

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The habitual fear I felt of my father, was too strong to admit of my daring to disobey him in the smallest article; I had therefore little time to soothe the mind of poor Harriet, who, indeed, appeared too much disturbed and afflicted to receive consolation from any thing I could offer. She was drowned in tears, and repeatedly declared that nothing should force her to violate her own sense of honour; that she would rather die than become the wife of Lord Easure. I felt the greatest unwillingness to leave her in so much distress; but the orders of my father were not to be disputed. Upon entering the drawing room I found him already there, together with the Earl and his son. The latter rising upon my entrance, and approaching me with a smile of self-satisfied importance, Well my dear Lady Frances, (said he,) will you pardon me for the preference I have given your sister? Though, continued

tinued he, (lowering his voice,) you know matrimonial choice does not always imply preference. I was too much hurt and disgusted to answer him, nor during the night could I prevail upon myself to exert the smallest degree of chearfulness. Upon retiring to my chamber I called at that of my sister. I found her more composed. She was sealing a letter, which appeared to be of considerable length. As soon as it was finished, she turned to me, and taking my hand, My dear Frances, (said she,) I observe with pleasure the affectionate share you take in my sufferings; but do not, my love, let them too deeply affect you. I have resolved in what manner to act; if I can escape the misfortune that threatens me, I certainly will; if not, I must submit to it in the best manner I can. All the assistance I have to request from you, is, that the next time my brother or

Sir

Sir Philip Hastings visit us, which I have reason to believe will be to-morrow, that you will take an opportunity of giving this letter to one of them; to which, is a matter of perfect indifference. The reluctance I have acknowledged to the proposed marriage with Lord Easure, will probably induce my father to watch me more narrowly than common; but you will enjoy your usual degree of liberty, and may easily oblige me. I readily promised to do every thing she desired, and, indeed, so entirely did I love her, and so deeply was I interested in her happiness, that there were few things I would not have attempted to do her service.

The following day, my brother and Sir Philip arrived, according to my sister's expectation. They were in their usual spirits, not having heard any thing of what had passed. A few minutes after their entrance, my father requested
that

that my brother would accompany him into the library, he instantly obeyed, casting, as he quitted the room, an expressive look upon his friend, which was returned by one of mingled pleasure and apprehension; from which I conjectured that it was agreed upon between them, that the former should this morning make the intended proposal to his father. As Lord Belford and his son were with us in the room, I had no immediate opportunity of delivering my letter: at length I found one, while their eyes were employed in viewing a picture done by Opie, which had that morning been put up. He had scarce received it, when a servant entered, requesting that the Baronet would walk into the library. I observed his colour heighten, as he prepared to obey the summon, while that of poor Harriet intirely forsook her cheeks, and she with difficulty preserved herself from

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fainting. In less than a quarter of an hour my father entered: his features were discomposed, and his whole countenance expressive of anger, contempt, and severity. He strove to conceal his feelings, and address his guests with complacency; but, though he was by no means deficient in courtly dissimulation, it was with extreme difficulty that he preserved a tolerable appearance of ease; and the frequent looks of scorn and displeasure which he darted at my sister, but too plainly discovered, that, however politeness, and a regard for the company present, restrained him in words and actions, his mind was swayed by the most violent passions, and that she was the object of his extreme anger and contempt, if not of his aversion. His entrance was soon followed by that of my brother; but he entered alone, unaccompanied by his friend. Disappointment and vexation were depicted upon

upon his brow. He often gazed upon Harriet with tender concern, treated Lord Belford and his son with extreme coldness, spoke very little during the remainder of his visit, and took leave early in the evening.

He had no sooner left us, than my father, apologizing to his friends for a temporary absence, in a stern and commanding voice, ordered my sister and me to follow him to his dressing-room. Thither did we attend him, like two culprits, who were about to receive sentence from the severest judge, and for the worst of crimes. Upon entering, he seated himself, and ordering us to stand before him, informed my sister of the proposal her brother had made him, of a marriage between her and Sir Philip Hastings. I need not tell you (continued he) in what manner it was received. I cannot express my contempt for your folly and insolence in consent-

ing to it, or his meanness in making it. I shall no more descend to mention an affair by which my family has been affronted, and which, had they the smallest remains of conscious dignity left, they would treat with resentment and disdain. I did not direct you to attend me here, in order to consult either your opinions or inclinations, both of which I perceive are in direct opposition to your honour and interest, but to inform you, that I have fixed upon the day after to-morrow for that of your marriage with Lord Easure, which I am determined shall then take place. Your brother's want of children obliges me to seek, in another line, for the continuation of my family: that of Villars is one of the most ancient and honourable in the kingdom, and Lord Easure will, at the death of his father, possess one of the largest estates in the island. I am therefore resolved to settle my whole fortune

fortune upon your second son, and to use all my interest with my sovereign (which I flatter myself is not inconsiderable) to insure my title to him, after the decease of your brother. Thus you perceive (continued he, with a voice somewhat more expressive of kindness) the glorious prospects before you: go and prepare yourself for the proper reception of them. Do not answer me! (continued he, seeing her about to speak). No power on earth shall alter my determination! It is to no purpose that you talk to me of love and hatred, living and dying, with all the rest of that common pretence by which the resolutions of so many weak fathers are shaken. Miserable or happy, dead or alive, you shall be the wife of Lord Easure!

He then turned to me, who stood trembling by the side of my half-fainting Harriet, and added, It was my

pleasure that you, Frances, should be present upon this occasion, that you might have the opportunity of profiting by the example of your sister, and of learning, from what hath now passed, that the commands of a father are not to be disputed. So saying, he waved his hand in token of our dismissal, and with some difficulty we quitted his presence, poor Harriet being scarce able to walk, and I in no very proper condition to support her.

The moment we reached my sister's dressing-room, we flung ourselves, as by mutual consent, upon a sofa, and for some time gave way to the most violent passion of tears. I first recovered the power of speaking, and, in the best manner I was able, endeavoured to comfort my sister; but she was quite inconsolable, declaring, that she was the most unfortunate of human beings; that the haste with which my father had
resolved

resolved to complete her ruin, rendered it impossible for her to concert any measures for avoiding it; and that she had now no prospect, but that of falling a sacrifice to his unfeeling ambition. I could only weep, and beg her to be comforted; for, alas! I had no consolation to offer her, not being able to conceive any means by which she could hope to soften my father, or escape the effects of his tyranny. Our tears were still flowing, when we were summoned to attend supper. My sister did not strive to conceal her uneasiness. During the time of supper, her handkerchief was scarce ever from her eyes, and the plate which was placed before her was removed untouched. A few moments after the cloth was removed, and the attendants retired, my father and Lord Belford arose, as by agreement, and quitted the room, the former ordering my sister and me not to leave it till his

return. They were no sooner gone, than Lord Easure, walking with a careless air up to Harriet, seated himself by her side, and attempting to take one of her hands, which she scornfully withdrew, Well, my dear lady, (said he,) you find what the old people have resolved upon. I presume Lord Clareville has informed you, that the day after to-morrow is fixed for the commencement of my happiness. I cannot suppose (replied my sister) that your Lordship can possibly expect to derive happiness from a marriage entirely devoid of affection, or that you can ever seriously think of passing your life with a woman, who, so far from being able to return the preference with which you honour her, will consider the necessity which compels her to unite herself to you, as the severest misfortune of her life. I trust (answered Lord Easure) that these sentiments will quickly

quickly change, and that I shall, in a short time, be favoured with as full a possession of my dear Lady Harriet's heart, as I shall ever presume to desire. Never! never! sir, (exclaimed my sister warmly,) never can my heart, which I acknowledge to be devoted to another, admit a second object of choice. If you can be ungenerous enough to resolve upon making me completely unhappy, by taking advantage of my father's cruelty and power, never must you expect to gain the smallest degree of my esteem or affection. I am sorry (replied his lordship) that the proposal happens to be disagreeable to you, because I really know no means by which it can be avoided. How! (replied Harriet,) is it not in your power to reject it? Surely, knowing my sentiments, you cannot want inducements to do so. Can you think, with patience, of marrying a woman who cannot love you—

who loves another? I am really surprised (answered his lordship) to receive such sentiments from a lady of your rank in life,—sentiments which I should rather have expected to hear from the romantic daughter of a country parson. You must excuse me, my dear madam, if I cannot help smiling, to hear you talk with so much earnestness about love, esteem, and I know not how many fancied necessities, in a matrimonial engagement. Do you really think them so very indispensable? Indeed I do, (replied Harriet,) nor do I know any thing that can compensate for the loss of them. I am sorry (replied he) that we differ so much in our opinions. I am so far from thinking them necessary, that I rather esteem them troublesome and inconvenient, and the great destroyers of peace and politeness in the married state. Then, (answered Harriet,) since you are not induced to seek

seek my hand from motives of inclination, I trust you will grant that to my intreaties, which you refuse to the care of your own honour. Let me appeal to your generosity, to your politeness. By every thing you esteem estimable in man, let me conjure you to decline the purposed marriage ! Your so doing will eternally oblige me—will entitle you to my warmest, my most lasting gratitude. It really gives me extreme pain (answered his lordship) to be under the necessity of refusing any thing to so amiable a lady. Were I only to consult my own inclinations, I would most cheerfully obey you ; but in the present instance, I am sorry to add, that I am not my own master. Not your own master ! (exclaimed my sister.) What do you mean ? It has long been an agreement between Lord Belford and me, (answered Lord Easure,) that, provided he permitted me to follow my own plans in

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the affairs of love, he should entirely govern those of matrimony. It has been his pleasure to point you out as the person he wishes me to marry ; and my honour is engaged to fulfil my part of the treaty, as I can with truth aver, he has never in the smallest degree infringed his.

Harriet was about to have replied, when the entrance of the two Earls put an end to the conversation. In a few minutes after they were seated, my sister and I retired to her apartment. Indignation had, in some measure, supported her spirits, while Lord Easure was in her sight ; but no sooner were we alone, than she relapsed into all her former sorrow. She was watering my bosom with her tears, and lamenting her unfortunate situation, in a manner that exceedingly affected me, when her maid entered, and delivered a letter to her, which she said had been brought by

by Lord Seward's valet, with particular orders to have it delivered into her own hands. Harriet snatched it from her with every appearance of impatience, and while she perused it, I with pleasure observed her countenance brighten, and joy sparkle in her eyes. As soon as she had finished reading, she folded up the letter, and put it into her pocket, with a look of perfect satisfaction. Then turning to me, with a smile, "Our dear good brother (said she) promises to intercede for me; he bids me hope every thing from his friendship. Good night, my love! (continued she, kissing me,) let me no longer detain you from rest. I shall now want no comforter."

I was delighted to see her so suddenly restored to peace and apparent cheerfulness; though, after what was passed, I could not but wonder at the confidence she seemed to place in an inter-
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cession which had already proved vain. I was rejoiced to see her more at ease, but feared soon to behold her again plunged in anguish and despair.

The next morning, however, she still appeared to retain hopes; for when I met her in the breakfast-room, she was composed, and almost cheerful, though she still treated Lord Easure with the most distant coldness, and spoke very little; but he made ample amends for her silence, his spirits being uncommonly high, which occasioned him to talk almost incessantly. He addressed much of his conversation to Harriet, which she seldom honoured by the smallest apparent attention. My father observing this, told him, he hoped he would have a more obliging wife than he had a mistress. To which his Lordship answered, that he did not in the least doubt it, adding, I am really quite charmed with my dear Lady

Lady Harriet's behaviour; she is the first coy reluctant beauty I ever had the good fortune to meet with, and the unexpected novelty gives zest to matrimony itself.

During the whole day, my sister continued in the same state of composure. Instead of seeking to be alone, or conversing with me, she appeared studiously to avoid both; and when my father condescended two or three times to consult her about the arrangements of the next day, she only answered, that she wished every thing to be ordered just as he thought proper. When we retired for the evening, she kissed me with much affection, telling me, that her future prospects wore, in her opinion, a very different aspect from that with which they had appeared to her two days before. I have now, (continued she) little doubt of passing my days at least comfortably; but, as
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it will require all my strength of mind to go through the task I have promised to perform, I must beg of my dear Frances to leave me. Your presence, my love, rather softens and confuses my ideas, than contributes to their strength and regulation; oblige me, therefore, by omitting to call upon me in the morning, nor permit any one to disturb me till every thing is in readiness for the ceremony. I have need (added she, sighing,) of all my resolution, to support me in a situation so trying as that before me. I took leave of her, with expressing my sincerest wishes for her happiness, and an assurance that I would implicitly observe the directions she had given me.

I arose the following morning, with a heart depressed by sorrow and apprehension. Notwithstanding my sister's apparent calmness, I had no doubt but her reluctance and dislike to the thoughts

thoughts of becoming the wife of Lord Easfure were as strong, though not so violent, as ever. She had never accustomed herself to talk to me upon the subject of her attachment to Sir Philip Hastings, fearing, as I always believed, to draw upon me the displeasure of her father, or fill my imagination with improper ideas; but I was certain, that it was of the firmest kind, and the great difference between the men considered, it was not probable that she could so suddenly bring herself to give up the one, and accept the other, without doing the utmost violence both to her principles and feelings.

It had been settled, between my father and Lord Belford, that the marriage ceremony should be performed at ten in the morning. An elegant breakfast was to succeed; after which, we were all to set out for Belford Abbey, where every possible festivity, which
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the occasion could require or admit, was to be celebrated in its honour.

About a quarter of an hour before the appointed time, I entered my father's library, which was appointed for the place of rendezvous upon this, to me, most solemn occasion. The two Earls were already there, as was the Bishop of ———, our near relation, who was appointed to perform the ceremony. But the person who most powerfully attracted my attention, was a young gentleman of the most noble and engaging appearance I had ever beheld. You know the present Earl of Belford, my dear Miss Maitland, (continued Lady Frances,) and will not therefore be surpris'd to hear that he was, two and twenty years since, accounted one of the handsomest and most accomplished young men in the kingdom. To me, indeed, he appeared such; and when, upon his father's presenting him

to me, he respectfully kissed my hand, requesting that he might, upon the strength of the alliance which was about to take place between our families, have the honour to be admitted into the number of my friends, methought he spoke with more grace, elegance, and animation, than any other person I had ever seen or heard.

We had conversed but a few minutes, when the entrance of the intended bridegroom interrupted us, and recalled my thoughts to the disagreeable scene I was apprehensive of shortly beholding. I could not help feeling a strong regret; that he did not in something resemble Mr. Villars, who my young and inexperienced heart had already told me was every thing that could be esteemed amiable. His appearance was indeed, upon this occasion, most unlike to that of his brother. His dress was affectedly negligent, almost
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to dirtynefs, and he entered the room with a kind of half-yawn, which he intended fhould be expreffive of indolence and indifference. So, (exclaimed he, fhugging up his fhoulders,) I fee you are all affembled. And my good Lord of ——— too! nay, then there is no hope left! When the fquare cap appears, condemnation muft follow! I hope, my Lord, (answered the Bifhop) I fhall be the means of infuring your felicity, not the pronouncer of your condemnation. The chances (replied his Lordfhip) are, I fear, rather againft matrimonial adventurers. But the die is caft; the family jewels are new fet, and the Lady muft not be difappointed. Then, turning to his brother, he added, in a half-whifper, Faith, Frederic, I almoft wifh thou wouldft become my proxy; I do not quite relifh this ferious fooling. Suppofe (replied Mr. Villars) I fhould, in confequence

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of my compliance with your whimsical request, happen to become your proxy in your lady's affections? Oh! as for that, (answered his Lordship,) I must run the common hazard. I do not mean to make a jealous husband.

He was here interrupted by my father, who asked me, if my sister was prepared, and ready to appear. To which I answered, that I knew nothing that was likely to prevent her. Upon which a servant was directed to request the favor of her company. He returned to inform us, that her woman said, she would be ready in a quarter of an hour. My father seemed a little displeased at this want of punctuality; and Lord Easure repeating the significant shrug of his shoulders, exclaimed, in a low voice, A short reprieve is better than none. Though (continued he, affectedly addressing me) I am really sorry that your sister gives herself
so

so much unnecessary trouble about dress. In my opinion, she looks vastly well in her blue habit. You, at least, have nothing to accuse yourself of upon that account, (said Mr. Villars.) One would judge, by the extreme negligence of your appearance, that you had been married these seven years. Why, you know (replied his lordship) it *must* come to this; and really, at this unseasonable hour, one is more inclined to repose, than to study the *briliongue* in appearance.

More chat of the same kind passed among us, till my father, growing quite impatient, sent another message up to my sister, informing her that we were all waiting, and requesting that she would come down immediately. In a few moments (the door of the library being left open) we heard the rustling of silk, and a female step descending slowly down the great stairs. Here she

is! (exclaimed Lord Easure in an affected fright.) There's no escaping now! Prithee, Frederic, be merciful! Don't laugh at me! Remember, thou must wear shackles some time or other! Destiny will be fulfilled!—At this instant, with a countenance half confident, half terrified, entered my sister's woman, and informed us, that her lady had the evening before left the house, and was upon her road to London, in company with Sir Philip Hastings. Never was rage, surprise, and mortified vanity, more conspicuously and strongly expressed, than upon the countenances of the company present, when this unexpected account was delivered. My father's passion exceeded all bounds. He stamped, bit his lips, and for a few moments wholly resigned himself to the influence of his natural violence of temper. Then suddenly pausing, and assuming a solemn resoluteness of look and

and accent, he swore never more to admit my sister into his presence, or consider her as in any degree entitled to his care or protection. The Bishop of — would have remonstrated against, what he termed, so rash and improper a resolution, but my father absolutely refused to hear him, saying, he was determined to act for himself, and willing to risk any consequences which his conduct in the present instance might draw upon him. His lordship, finding all his endeavours to act in the capacity of a peace-maker vain and unregarded, took his leave, not chusing longer to witness a scene of so much violence and confusion.

My father ordered Harriet's woman to leave the house immediately; to which she answered, that she was prepared to do so, having received her lady's commands to follow her to town. Lord Belford asked, if it would not be proper

proper to follow the run-aways? saying, he thought they might yet possibly be overtaken, before a marriage could be effected. But my father absolutely refused to think of it. No, (said he, with a look and voice perfectly cool and determined,) let her folly be its own punishment. She no longer belongs to me, or my family. Were she my only child, my only relation, I would never behold her more.

During the first day after my sister's elopement, Lord Easure appeared in a state of extreme mortification. He had lost great part of his affected humour, and had little or nothing to answer in return to his brother's raillery, of which the latter was by no means sparing, and which I could not help enjoying exceedingly. I was, indeed, sincerely rejoiced that my sister had escaped the misery which must have been her portion, had she become the wife of so

weak, worthless, and ill-disposed a being as Lord Easure. I could not doubt but time would soften my father's severity towards her. She had chosen a man whose character was uncommonly excellent, and whose situation in life could not discredit a family of the first importance. I had therefore the strongest hope of soon beholding her return, and resume at least her usual place in his affection; but in this I was mistaken, and inexpressibly disappointed. My father would neither see his daughter nor her husband: he returned their letters unopened, and refused to suffer either my brother, his lady, or myself, to speak a word in her vindication; telling me, that, in his treatment of her, I had a lesson of conduct, which he hoped I would apply to my own use, since I might assure myself, that, in a similar situation, that which I should experience

rience would be in every respect the same.

Lord Belford and his sons continued at Clareville rather more than a week after the departure of my sister, during which time Mr. Villars every day appeared more agreeable in my eyes. His person was uncommonly fine, his manners equally pleasing, his sentiments, opinions and dispositions, apparently all that honour, virtue and delicacy, could inspire or demand. Seventeen is not an age at which to distinguish the specious from the intrinsic. I was charmed with every thing that was done or said by Mr. Villars; and the striking contrast between him and his brother, which every hour presented itself before me, strengthened the approbation which his fine qualities appeared to demand. When he quitted Clareville, I thought every thing that had power to please departed with him, and I trembled to

look forward to the melancholy life I was likely to lead with my father, whose increasing ill health, and the disappointment he had lately met with, had greatly added to the natural gloom and severity of his temper. I was not suffered to correspond with my sister; very seldom permitted to visit my brother, who, on account of the part he had taken in her marriage, and the intimacy which still continued to subsist between him and Sir Philip, was no longer a welcome guest at Clareville, and therefore rarely approached it. The company of my sister had hitherto rendered my situation supportable. We had always sincerely loved each other; and the pleasure of complaining to those we love, and by whom our affection is returned, is so great, as almost to compensate for the occasion which gives rise to it. But I had now no friend, no companion, no relief from constraint and

and sorrow. I thought, indeed, that no condition could well be more mortifying; yet I dreaded the very idea of change, which I thought could only be effected by such a marriage as that from which my sister had escaped, and which I saw no means of avoiding, but by forfeiting every advantage of my birth. The only comfort I possessed, lay in the hope that this misfortune was at a distance. But in this hope I was deceived: the dreaded stroke was even then suspended over my head.

About twelve months after my sister's marriage, as I was sitting in my father's dressing-room, after conversing for some time with rather more than usual cheerfulness, Frances, (said he,) your sister's disobedience and folly have wholly banished her from my affections: she is no longer my daughter. Your brother's want of children, and his retired manner of living, renders any addition to

his fortune unnecessary: upon you, therefore, I have fixed my hopes. The chearful manner in which you have attended me, ever since my retirement from public life, affords me the most agreeable assurance of your perfect and ready submission to my directions and pleasure, in an affair of the utmost importance to your interest and honour, and upon which I have in a particular manner set my heart. Should your conduct prove you unworthy of my regard, I am determined to make a distant relation my heir, and to use that interest in his favour which I hope to exert in the aggrandizement of your descendants. But your apparent disposition, and the proper sense of duty which you have ever appeared to entertain, leads me to expect better things. You are not ignorant of the ancient amity and friendship which hath for many ages subsisted between my house and that of

Belford.

Belford. You know, likewise, the ill usage which the present lord (who is my personal friend) has lately received in my family. Yet, so far from resenting it, as I might have expected him to do, he is still desirous of allying himself to it, in order to which he hath purposed a marriage between you and his eldest son. I have consented; and it now remains that your chearful and unconstrained obedience proves you worthy of the attention I pay to your happiness, and the great degree of it which awaits you.

It was with difficulty that I continued to support myself in my chair. I trembled; I could scarce breathe. My father, observing my situation, arose and quitted the room, leaving me at leisure to contemplate my own wretchedness. I was indeed wretched! My aversion, my contempt for Lord Easure, was unspeakable. He had been the cause of

all my beloved sister's misfortunes. His ungenerous behaviour to her, his person, his manners, his disposition, and avowed principle, were every thing that could raise my abhorrence, my hatred. Yet I saw no means of escaping the miserable fate which threatened me; death only appeared capable of affording me a shelter from the tyranny of my father. Oh! how ardently did I wish for the power of seeking that peace in the grave, which the world appeared to deny me. Nothing but the fear of incurring unpardonable guilt, of drawing down upon my devoted head the anger of that Being, whose approbation, which constantly attends those who seek to obtain it, could alone render existence supportable, restrained my hand, which more than once was upon the very point of executing the last act of desperation. I cannot even now reflect upon the struggle I endured, without in part feeling the pangs of horror and despair which

which then tore my wretched bosom. At length the strong sense of religion, which from my earliest years had happily been impressed upon my mind, in some degree calmed its agitations. Despair dictated a conduct similar to that, which indifference would have pointed out. I knew how vain it was to expect or supplicate mercy from my father; Lord Belford and his son were equally unfeeling. I therefore determined to submit, without further struggle, to give my hand to Lord Easure, and patiently wait till death, (whose wished for approach my sorrow could not but accelerate,) should put an end to my sufferings.

In this resolution I waited, with a gloomy kind of resignation, for the day, upon which I was to sacrifice all my future hopes of comfort. It was some satisfaction to me to hear, that I was not to be tormented by the sight of

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my intended husband, till the day preceding that, upon which the ceremony was to take place. But, alas! the day of his arrival came but too soon. I awakened with a degree of horror upon my mind, which is more easily conceived than expressed, and several hours elapsed, before I could regain a state of tolerable composure. At length the object of my strongest aversion appeared, but the effects which the sight of him would probably have produced upon me were in a great measure lost, by his being accompanied by his brother.

Mr. Villars looked more amiable, more pleasing than ever. He addressed me with the affection of a brother, mingled with something still more interesting; expressed great concern at seeing my countenance so much altered since he had last beheld me; and said every thing that could tend to convince me, that my happiness was dear to him.

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His looks, too, expressed more than his words; they told me, that his heart felt more than they dared to utter; that nothing but hope was wanting to render him my lover. As for Lord Easure, his behaviour was an exact counterpart of that which I have already described when my sister was the object of his persecution. I could not behold him without horror, or think of my approaching marriage without inexpressible pain.

Notwithstanding these conflicts which my heart endured, I had resolution enough to preserve a countenance tolerably steady. I was supported by despair, which told me, that complaint was vain, and I had ever considered useless repining as the offspring of weakness. But, when the papers, settlements, &c. were produced, and Lord Easure having signed his name, presented the pen to me, that I might follow his example, a trembling seized my whole frame, the

light danced before my eyes, I had just strength to write my name, when the instrument fell from my hand, and I fainted away.

When I recovered, I found myself in the arms of Mr. Villars, who in a manner expressive of the tenderest concern, inquired after my health. Since the departure of my sister I had not heard the voice of tenderness. Even her's was less soft than that of Mr. Villars. It sunk into my heart; I felt that I was more wretched than ever. A couple of hours which I passed alone in my dressing room were hardly sufficient to enable me to return to the drawing room with tolerable composure, yet an irresistible something drew me thither. Upon entering I found Mr. Villars alone, seated upon a sofa, in the most melancholy attitude. The moment he beheld me, joy sparkled in his fine eyes, but it was soon succeeded by dejection.

dejection. He handed me to the sofa, and silently seating himself by my side, a deep sigh escaped him, which appeared to issue from the closest recesses of his soul. My eyes involuntarily met his; he seemed confused, caught my hand, impressed an ardent kiss upon it, then starting up, walked to a distant window without uttering a single word.

I was surprised, almost frightened, and doubtful whether I ought not to leave the room, when he suddenly returned, and resuming his seat, Forgive, (he exclaimed,) most amiable of women, forgive the involuntarily transports of a heart, but too sensible of your perfections. Alas! Lady Frances, (continued he, pressing my trembling hand) you are not happy. My brother does not owe his good fortune to the preference with which your heart regards him, but to a too rigid sense of duty, which will, I fear, hurry you to an act, the consequence

quence of which must render the remainder of your life unhappy. Forgive, (continued he,) the abrupt manner in which I have ventured to introduce a subject of so much importance : alas ! this may be the last moment for deliberation. To-morrow you are lost for ever.

I will not, my dear Miss Maitland, (continued Lady Frances,) attempt to give you the particulars of a conversation which lasted more than two hours. Suffice it to say, that Mr. Villars was a perfect master of the arts of persuasion ; that he so effectually employed those arts, as to induce me to promise to follow my sister's example, and that very evening meet him at the bottom of the Park, where he proposed to have a chaise and four in readiness, to convey me to Scotland. I had represented to him the certain consequences of such a step ; namely, the intire loss of my father's
favour,

favour, and the fortune I had a right to hope for from him; but he treated these considerations as of no importance, when compared with the loss or acquisition of happiness; saying he had little doubt but his father, who possessed great influence over the mind of Lord Clareville, would easily prevail upon him to forgive an action in its own nature so justifiable; especially as he had no other child, who might by such an act of lenity, be encouraged to dispute his future commands. But should he obstinately adhere to the resolution he professed to have taken, his own fortune, which, (he said,) was not inconsiderable, would enable him to support the woman he loved in easy independence, though not in the affluence and dignity in which he could wish to place her.

The wretchedness of my situation, the unhop'd for happiness of escaping from a life of mortification and pain,
and

and the delightful prospect of passing it with one so amiable, so generous, one by whom I was tenderly beloved, and whose fine qualities and goodness of heart, would render it my pride and glory to acknowledge as my deliverer, my guardian, my all, were circumstances, which too powerfully operated upon my imagination, to admit of my perceiving either danger or difficulty in the plan we had fixed upon. Every thing was agreed, the hour appointed, and all arranged to our intire satisfaction, when my father and Lord Easure returned from a walk they had taken in the Park. The former complained of extreme fatigue and pain in his head. He ate nothing at dinner, and in the course of the evening felt evident symptoms of a violent fever. The physician who usually attended him was immediately sent for, who ordered him to be put to bed, and appeared much alarmed at the situation

in which he found him. In a few hours he became delirious, and the fever increased so rapidly, that the doctor requested that more assistance might be called in, as the symptoms were of the very worst kind.

This circumstance intirely put an end to my intended journey. Mr. Villars, indeed, mentioned my taking advantage of the confusion of the family, and my father's weak state, which rendered him incapable of pursuing us, and getting safe to Scotland while it was in my power; but I absolutely refused to comply with his request, not without expressing some indignation at his supposing me unfeeling enough to forsake a parent in such a situation. For which he apologized, by pleading the strength of his passion, and his fears that my health might be injured by a close attendance upon my father, such as he knew my high sense of duty would lead me

me to pay, while I continued at Clareville. How easily are we induced to pardon those we love, whose actions always appear to us in the fairest light. I ought to have suspected the man who could for a moment have wished me to violate every sense of propriety, delicacy, and duty, in order to gratify his own passion. But, alas! I had not accustomed myself so exactly to weigh things in the scale of judgment and right. If I did not suffer my affection for Mr. Villars intirely to blind my reason, it at least obscured it too much to admit of my observing the tendency of his conduct upon this occasion, or perceiving that it was dictated by a selfish ungenerous heart.

During the whole night I remained in my father's apartment; his fever still continued to increase, and when two more of the faculty arrived early the next morning they pronounced him in
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the utmost danger. I dispatched a servant immediately to my brother, requesting his presence; and as soon as he had seen his father, and heard the opinions of the consultation, I requested that he would inform Lord Easure, that during my father's continuance in his present state of insensibility, I thought myself at liberty to act according to my own choice and determination; and that I was resolved to listen to no proposals of the nature of that with which he had honoured me, at least till his perfect recovery should again subject me to his influence. This message, which was delivered by my brother, in a manner which left my tormentor no hope of reversing the sentence it conveyed, had all the effect I could desire from it; his Lordship that very afternoon quitted Clareville, nor did I ever afterwards behold him.

For

For more than a fortnight, my father continued in a state of the utmost danger: about that time his disorder took a favourable turn, but his recovery was slow, and his constitution so much weakened and impaired by its violence, that his physicians thought a change of climate necessary to the restoration of his health. We accordingly removed to the south of France, it having been settled between my father, (to whom my attendance was necessary,) and Lord Belford, that my marriage with Lord Easure should take place immediately upon our return to England.

For some months after our arrival upon the continent, my father continued in a state of great debility, both of mind and body. He appeared to be grown almost wholly indifferent to every thing which he had once esteemed of consequence, but about the trifles by which he was surrounded, he was capricious

precious and particular beyond a possibility of satisfaction or tolerable comfort. Though every one who approached him, made his ease and humour their principal study, he was constantly complaining of the neglect and ill usage which he suffered, and if I was absent from his chamber for more than ten minutes at a time, he would reproach me in the severest terms with being weary of the performance of my duty; often telling me, that he knew I should be glad of his death, but adding, that he would take care to give me no cause to rejoice, for that he was resolved to bequeath me only a bare subsistence.

About six months after we were settled at Montpelier, Mr. Villars, with whom I had regularly corresponded, made his appearance there, pretending to my father, that a sudden and violent disorder, with which he had been seized,

was

was the occasion of his journey, and that he was ordered by his physicians to pass some months upon the continent. As the Earl had never entertained the most distant suspicion of the attachment which subsisted between our visitor and myself, he received him in the most gracious manner, and gave him a general invitation to pass all his leisure hours at our house; of this permission Mr. Villars availed himself in its fullest extent, for he almost lived there. He would generally pay his respects to my father every morning, and chat with him for about half an hour in his chamber, which he now never quitted, except when he went out in a carriage for the benefit of the air. After this visit, Mr. Villars usually retired to the drawing-room, where he often passed the whole day, reading, drawing, playing on the harpsichord, or amusing himself with his own reflections. Com-
pany

pany he had no chance of meeting, no visitant, except himself, ever being admitted within our doors.

Whenever my father slept, or went an airing, each of which he regularly did twice every day, I constantly passed the time of his absence in the drawing-room, where the lively engaging conversation of Mr. Villars compensated for the many melancholy hours I passed with him. The contrast indeed between them was too great; all my pleasure depended upon him; to him only could I complain of my discomforts, and only from him did I expect or receive consolation: these were dangerous circumstances to a temper warm, open, and susceptible as mine. Yet I always steadily refused to hearken to any proposal of leaving my father, whose situation demanded all my care, and upon whom I was resolved to attend to the last moments of life, whatever might be the present

present treatment, or future reward I had to expect from him. But by degrees, Mr. Villars gained such an ascendancy over my mind, so much did my love for him increase, that he persuaded me to consent to a private marriage, which was performed by my father's chaplain, in the presence of a particular friend whom my lover introduced to me, and with whose name and family I was well acquainted, and two of my own favourite domestics.

Our family were all so much attached to my person, by good offices, which I had constant opportunities of doing them, that I had little reason to fear that a discovery would have been made to my father, had my marriage been known to every individual belonging to it, but such precautions had been taken as wholly to elude their suspicions; and some months elapsed, during which, it continued a profound secret to every one,

one, except those who were present at its performance.

My father had, during the first year of his residence at Montpelier, been flattered with the hope of a perfect restoration to health, but soon after the event I have just related had taken place, many of his former bad symptoms returned again, though with less violence, and his recovery was pronounced doubtful. The offence which I could not but be conscious of having committed against parental authority, redoubled my attentions to him, for I now felt it a duty to submit to every difficulty, which his increasing illness and caprice brought upon me, without even the slightest murmur. My husband's fondness and gratitude for what he called my condescension, appeared every hour to become warmer and more lively; I had no doubt of our marriage remaining a secret during my father's

life, after which, as I should be in every respect my own mistress, I should no longer have any reason to wish it to continue such, but might look forward to years of unclouded happiness.

One morning that Mr. Villars was gone with a party of his friends upon a pleasureable excursion, which he had exceedingly lamented that I could not partake with him, and my father was taking one of his usual airings, upon which occasions, he chose the attendance of his nurse rather than mine, I was sitting in my dressing-room revolving in my mind past events, and amusing myself with pleasing views of the future; when a post-chaise stopped at the door, in which was a lady who requested to speak with me upon very particular business. It never was my custom to stand aloof, and shut myself up from my fellow creatures, more than the haughty and severe temper of my father

father rendered unavoidable; it had ever been my desire to mix with the worthy and amiable, without exactly considering whether their rank or fortune entitled them to so vast an honour; for I never could esteem myself as in truth and nature their superior.

The stranger who now solicited, found an easy admission; she was a beautiful young woman, elegant in her appearance; and if I could judge from the short conversation I held with her, pleasing in her manners. After some apologies for her intrusion, and the seeming liberty she was about to take, she asked me if Mr. Villars did not at that time privately pay his addresses to me? I was much surprized at the question, and desired to know for what reason it was proposed to me; upon which, with many tears, and every possible appearance of distress, she told me that she had the misfortune to be his wife, and

convinced me of the truth of what she asserted by the sight of several letters, the hand-writing of which I but too well knew to be his, in which he not only stiled her his dear wife, and subscribed himself her happy and affectionate husband, but mentioned various circumstances relative to their marriage, expressed the most grateful sense of the confidence she had reposed in him, and promised to embrace the very earliest opportunity of informing his father of their union, and declaring it to the whole world.

Judge, my dear Juliana, judge my situation! Think what I must feel, when I tell you that I was at this time several months advanced in my pregnancy, and that I loved with inexpressible fondness the cruel author of my misery. I had just strength and resolution enough left in this dreadful moment to thank Mrs. Villars for her information,

formation, to assure her that she had nothing to fear from me as a rival in the affections of her husband, who I was resolved never more to behold, and to request that she would leave me. She had scarce quitted the room, when I fainted away; the moment that I was sufficiently recovered, I wrote a few lines to my deceiver, in which I informed him of the discovery I had made, and without descending to load him with a single reproach, absolutely forbad him ever more to appear in my sight. Upon this trying occasion my spirits and resolution seemed to be supported by a supernatural assistance; sorrow was overcome by indignation; the cruel injuries I had received, appeared at once to have broken the charm by which my affections were united to him from whom I had suffered them. He no longer appeared amiable; the close disguise which had so fatally deceived

me, was removed, and the selfish unprincipled hypocrite stood confessed, converting all that had been dear to my soul, into an object of its utmost scorn and aversion.

Mr. Villars wrote me several letters, but I returned them all unopened, being convinced that no apology he had the power of making could do away any part of his crime, or justify my forgiveness of it. Upon the back of one which he sent to me, I wrote these words: Trouble me no more; you are the husband of another; my resolution is founded upon principle, and not to be shaken: after this he ceased to molest me, and I was left to the quiet enjoyment of my wretchedness.

Notwithstanding the resolution with which I had supported so severe a trial of my constancy, my anxiety and regret brought a nervous fever, which for some time hung upon me; my situation

tion was every moment occurring to my mind, and afflicted it with pangs which nothing but those of guilt could exceed. I was under the necessity of revealing this melancholy circumstance to the two female domestics who were present at my marriage, (one of whom is now my woman, and the other my house-keeper at Clareville,) and concert with them the means of concealing it from my father. My illness had in a great measure obliged him to dispense with my attendance in his chamber, where I was often unable to appear for several successive days, by which means he was become accustomed to receive his medicines, &c. from his nurse, which it had before been my constant office to administer. I was a little beginning to recover from the disorder which had affected my health, when at the end of the seventh month of my pregnancy I was delivered of a daughter. The in-

fant was privately carried out of the house, and every thing so managed by my women that no other persons in the family suspected the cause of my illness; and having so frequently been accustomed to keep my room for two or three days together, it passed wholly unobserved by my father, who believed I had the best advice, and was indeed too much disordered in his own health to pay any great attention to that of another.

As soon as I could leave my room, all my attention was taken up with the care of my poor baby; for whom, though I had but once folded it to my bosom, but once impressed a maternal kiss upon its dear lips, I had instinctively conceived the most passionate fondness. I had directed that a wet nurse should be procured for it, and every thing done that could make it amends for the involuntary neglect of its unfortunate mother.

During

During a month I visited it every day; Burne always went with me, for in order effectually to prevent a possibility of the affair being made known to my father, she had told the nurse that the child was her own, but that I had promised to be its godmother, and bring it up for her at my own expence.

During these visits I was forced, while the nurse was present, to restrain my feelings, and behave as one to whom the infant was almost indifferent; but the moment she quitted the room, I would give a loose to the tenderness with which my heart overflowed; I would press it to my bosom, kiss its soft cheek, and weep over it by turns. I had, however, the pleasure of seeing it thrive as fast as I could hope; it was my resolution, as soon as I got to England, to send a nurse properly attended to fetch it over, to have it educated with the utmost care, and when it grew

up, to acknowledge it for my own, and afford it every advantage which I had the power to communicate, or nature had given it a right to claim. In pursuance of my pretended promise to Burne, I had it christened after the name of my mother, whose memory was extremely dear to me, upon which occasion I made a pretty large present to the nurse, in order to increase her care of my little darling, with which indeed I had every cause to be satisfied, as it grew very fast, and appeared in the most perfect health.

In this promising state it was, when a sudden inclination of my father's determined him to set out immediately upon his return to England, and I was forced to tear myself from the little creature who was become dearer to me than life. This was not effected without excessive pain, many passionate tears, and tender caresses; and when I im-
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pressed the last kiss upon its sweet lips, a cold shivering seized my heart, which instantly communicated itself to my whole frame, and which, were I at all inclined to superstition, I should consider as a signal of the affecting, irretrievable loss I was quickly to sustain.

We were scarcely landed at Dover, when we received the most unexpected and unwelcome account of the death of my brother, which was a shock I was hardly able to support, and which so greatly surprized and affected my father, that he lived but a few days after he had received it. During this short time he appeared deeply sensible of the vanity of human greatness and ambition; he repeatedly begged my forgiveness for the pain he had occasioned me, and the unkind manner in which he had so often treated me; but he could by no arguments be prevailed upon to alter the resolution he had made with regard
to

to my sister; so that having made a new regulation of his affairs, I found myself at his decease left sole heiress to his great fortune, and much richer than I had any right to be.

The first care that occupied my thoughts, after the interment of my father, was that of my poor baby; my heart beat with impatience to behold it again; I did not lose an hour in dispatching Burne over with considerable offers to the nurse, if she would consent to return with her; and if she appeared unwilling to accept them, it was my orders that she should inform her to whom the child belonged, and promise her whatever she asked, as an inducement to her removal; for I feared that a change might affect the health of my little darling, which I valued beyond every thing else in the world.

I cannot describe my impatience or anxiety during the absence of Burne.

At

At the time when I supposed she was upon her passage back, every breath of wind alarmed me, and my fancy presented to me every possible accident that could befall a traveller either by land or water. I counted the days and hours till the time of her expected return, when I hoped to receive my little treasure once more to my fond heart. I resolved to inform my friends and relatives of the imprudence I had been guilty of, to have the dear infant nursed in my own house, and to make her the solace and care of my remaining life. Judge then, my dear Miss Maitland, what was my disappointment, my anguish, when my woman returned with the melancholy information, that the sweet little angel had died in convulsions three days after I left it.

I will not pain your feeling heart by attempting to describe what mine endured; it had fixed its whole hopes of
comfort

comfort upon one dear object, and its disappointment was inexpressibly afflictive.

Soon after the loss of my infant, I saw in the public prints an account of the death of Lord Belford, which was in a few weeks succeeded by that of his eldest son; and shortly after, I had the misfortune to be deprived of my beloved sister, whose friendship had been my greatest consolation under all my distresses; though I never made her acquainted with the principal ones I had endured, fearing to involve her husband in a quarrel, which would, I knew, be the certain consequence of his being informed of the ill usage I had received. As for the present Lord Belford, I have never beheld him since I discovered the villainy of his conduct towards me. Soon after the death of my father, he employed a common friend to request that I would admit him once more into my

my presence, assuring me, that he had something to say, which would, he trusted, mollify, if not entirely remove, my resentment, for the crime I believed him to have committed against me: but I absolutely refused to see him; declaring, that I had not the smallest remaining regard for him; and begging, as the last and only request I ever should make him, that he never would, upon any occasion, appear in my sight; a request he has carefully attended to; nor do I believe, that the affair is at all suspected by the world, or known to any, except those who were present at my marriage, and yourself, the only person to whom it ever was by me related.

These, my dear Miss Maitland, are the circumstances which have robbed my youth of its cheerfulness, and still continue to cloud my day of life with a deep and painful regret of which my mind is unable to divest itself.

The

The tears of our heroine flowed apace: she kissed the hand of her revered friend; and, in a voice broken by her emotions, exclaimed, Oh! that I were that daughter! that it were in my power to soothe your regrets! You do soothe them, my dear, lovely girl, (answered Lady Frances;) you are my daughter; the adopted child of my affections. I know not, had my own been spared to my hopes, whether I could have loved her more than I do you. Juliana could with truth have replied, that she was far dearer to her than she to whom nature had obliged her to pay the external respect due to a parent; but a sense of duty never would permit her to mention her disapprobation of a mother's character or conduct. She spoke of her as seldom as possible; and never but upon trifling and general occasions, which admitted neither of praise or blame; but she was delighted

to

to hear Lady Frances speak of the late Sir George Maitland and his brother, with both of whom she was well acquainted, as two of the worthiest of men, and could have listened to several little anecdotes she related of them for ever; her mind dwelling with an inexpressible satisfaction upon the thought, that she had one parent for whom she had no cause to blush; but from whom, on the contrary, she derived honour, and had a right to that best inheritance, understanding and virtue.

It is then that time appears to move most swiftly, when its even tenor leaves no trace upon the memory, by which its parts may be separated, and an account kept of its progress. Thus Lady Frances and our heroine, though they were entirely without what is called amusement, found the fortnight they spent together pass insensibly away, before half of it seemed to be elapsed; and

and when a card arrived from Mordant-Place, to inform Miss Maitland that her mother and the family were returned, she received it as the disturber of a sweet repose, which she could almost have wished should never have been broken; at least she would have wished to have been awakened from the dream of friendship and rationality by something more interesting, than a return to the common forms, common objects, and common ideas of ordinary life.

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